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WOMEN, MEN, WORDS AND POWER:

A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AS IT PERTAINS TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEWCOMER

by

COLLETTE A. OSEEN ©

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled WOMEN, MEN, WORDS AND POWER: A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AS IT PERTAINS TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEWCOMER submitted by COLLETTE OSEEN in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

M. Haughey
M. Haughey
Supervisor

R. G. McIntosh
R.G. McIntosh

Linda LaRocque
L. LaRocque

Berta Young
B. Young

M. Assheton-Smith

J. Gaskell
External Examiner

February 1, 1993

FOR MY THREE SISTERS, MARGARET, ARDYTH AND LENNEA,

AND MY DAUGHTER, KATHRYN

"There comes a point, not possible to determine exactly when, at which equality became a cry that couldn't be made out, had been misheard or misinterpreted, turned out to be something else--finer. *Freedom.*"

Nadine Gordimer, 1990

"Still harping on the same subject, you will exclaim--How can I avoid it, when most of the struggles of an eventful life have been occasioned by the oppressed state of my sex: we reason deeply, when we forcibly feel."

Mary Woolstonecraft, 1796

ABSTRACT

In this feminist/postmodernist study of the newcomer to the organization I draw on feminist analyses of Derrida and Foucault to reconceptualize organizational theory, thus calling into question commonly held assumptions about the self, power, language, knowledge and reality.

How we understand what it means to be human, what counts as knowledge, our definitions of power and of language, all obviously affect how we understand the way women and men come to know the organization, understandings which are expressed in the political and economic theories that provide the pilings upon which we build our theories of organizations. I ask how might these theories--liberalism, Marxism, postmodernism and feminism--illuminate how women and men come to know the organization? What might each of these theories have to say about the self or the subject, knowledge, language and power? I conclude that postmodernism can be helpful to my project in its focus on the deconstitution of Western metaphysics and the confining dualities of the Enlightenment, and on the inextricable intertwining of knowledge and power. It attempts to grapple with the questions of who speaks for whom about what, of how knowledge is produced and for whose benefit, of how relationships of power and knowledge are constructed and maintained through language. However, it is not a theory which explicitly theorizes about gender and gender power relations other than tangentially: in postmodernism the self is conceived solely an as effect of language or discourse, and the effect of gender on the self, and the issue of gender power relations, disappears. If I am going to talk about women and men rather than just using a more obtuse version of the abstract individual of liberalism or the abstract worker of Marxism I need a theory that recognizes gender, one that can account for the production of asymmetrical gender power relations, relations which are dominant structuring principles in our organizations. Thus I propose the intersection of theories of

postmodernism with theories of feminism in order to explore how women and men come to know an organization new to them.

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the 1980's I spent several years as a teacher working in Chinese universities, and that experience called into question all my unacknowledged assumptions about how women and men come to know the organization. How do we figure out what we think the organization is all about and our position within it? How do we struggle to both find our place, and prevent ourselves from being pushed into place, some place where we don't want to be? I came back to Canada determined to explore how women and men come to know an organization new to them, at the same time as they try to create a place for themselves within it.

I knew I would approach these questions from the point of view of a Canadian at the end of the twentieth century, as a feminist, and as a socialist. My own coming of age as a feminist and as a political being coincided in 1968 when Trudeau came to power in Canada, and matured over these last two decades as Canadians have struggled with difference and how to accommodate it, a struggle which we have defined in this country in terms of language. Our particular struggle with difference has had theoretical ramifications for me as we here in Canada have attempted to develop political, organizational and feminist theories which can both illuminate how we live, and answer the question, how shall we live? Embedded in those questions are theories about human nature, about knowledge and about power, theories, like all theories, which are products of a particular time and place. In Canada we have our own historical caveats: if not like Germany, attempting to recapture rationality in the face of Auschwitz, if not an imperial power like America but a colony, in a country where language rather than race defines us, then where are our theories situated? Out of which set of historical circumstances do they grow, and what are the conditions of the present day which they attempt to illuminate? The fragility of the politics of allegiances versus the politics of identity, a conundrum on which both feminism and political theory focus, has a painful resonance for Canadians, both historically and at present.

Given this historical context, that I might focus on language, and on the intertwining of power and knowledge when I consider the question of how we come to know the organization is evident; what may be less evident is that I believe that we can not talk about either language, power or knowledge without talking about relations between women and men. More precisely, I maintain that we can't talk about any of these questions without talking about gender power relations, or the asymmetrical power relations between women and men which prevail in our society as a whole and in our organizations themselves. It is within this larger rubric of gender power relations that I position the question of how we come to know the organization.

How we understand human nature, what it means to be human, what counts as knowledge, our definitions of power and language, all obviously affect how we understand the way women and men come to know the organization. These understandings are expressed as political and economic theories which provide the pilings upon which we build our theories of organizations. How might these theories illuminate how women and men come to know the organization? I look at four: liberalism and Marxism, both falling under the rubric of modernism, postmodernism, and finally feminist theory as it grapples with each of these political theories in turn. What do each of these theories have to say about the self or the subject, knowledge, language and power?

Liberalism, the dominant viewpoint in American organizational literature, is a theory which emphasizes the (freely choosing) isolated individual, where individual differences in power are understood as either dysfunctional or irrelevant. It is a theory where gender power differences can be safely ignored. Marxism influences some of the European organizational literature, and as a theory which writes oppression into history, cannot be overlooked. However, although I agree with the concept of the socially embedded individual, class as an analytical category cannot illuminate women's lives. And both liberalism and Marxism share, in different ways, their Enlightenment or modernist heritage. Both emphasize a fixed reality which can be discovered and a fixed consciousness, both privilege rationality and link rationality to "rational man"—sites of power that are then deemed natural, and thus unanalysable. The very nature of modernism consigns woman to the position of Other, the Other which is also the lesser.

The postmodernist critique of modernism, of the certainties of the Enlightenment that link reason and progress to human happiness, seems to be a theory which can illuminate the crisis of authority—including the right of men to rule over women—of the late twentieth century. Neither God nor the man of reason nor the dualistic epistemology of the Enlightenment upon which the man of reason depends go unchallenged by postmodernism. In ways that postmodernism itself sometimes shies away from, it holds up the workings of power to our scrutiny, whether by stating that knowledge—pure truth in modernist thought—

cannot ever be separated from relations of power, or by exposing the "violent hierarchies" or the oppositional dualities of the Enlightenment as self-imposed ordering structures which confine, degrade and repress as they order, the fundamental opposition being that of man to woman.

Postmodernism can be helpful to my project in its focus on the deconstitution of Western metaphysics and the confining dualities of the Enlightenment, and on the inextricable intertwining of knowledge and power. It attempts to grapple with the questions of who speaks for whom about what, of how knowledge is produced and for whose benefit, of how relationships of power and knowledge are constructed and maintained through language. To the postmodernists, or at least those affected by Marxism (cf. Weedon, 1987), knowledge, while socially embedded and materially rather than ideally based, is not fixed in the sense of being unchanging. Knowledge is the understanding of the world by women and men who exist materially; it is mediated by power, it is not outside of power; it cannot be acquired through opposing the subject who knows to the object to be known. These understandings, these discourses of power and knowledge, to use Foucault's term, are expressed through language. As such, each discourse must be constantly subjected to what is termed "decentering the margins": that is, who speaks for whom and from what position of power, or what might be termed the analysis of the politics of location. To the postmodernists, every question is historically situated and political; there are no absolutes, no universals, no abstract universal 'man' with an unchanging consciousness positing universal laws about a fixed reality that can be rationally known—there is no knowledge which can stand outside relations of power. Instead, competing realities are constructed by women and men in language, mediated by power, and situated historically.

However, when I ask the question, How do women and men come to know an organization? I need a theory which can bring together ideas about knowledge and power, about language, and about gender. Postmodernism, as a theory about power, about language, and about the intertwining of knowledge and power in discourse, is very helpful to feminism, but it is not a theory which explicitly theorizes about gender and gender power relations other than tangentially: in postmodernism the self becomes solely an effect of language or discourse, and the effect of gender on the self, and the issue of gender power relations, disappears. If I am going to talk about women and men rather than just using a more obtuse version of the abstract individual of liberalism or the abstract worker of Marxism I need a theory that recognizes gender, one that can account for the production of asymmetrical gender power relations, relations which are dominant structuring principles in our organizations. Thus I propose the intersection of theories of postmodernism, in particular the deconstruction and deconstitution of Western metaphysics of Derrida and the discourse analysis of Foucault, with theories of feminism, in particular the writings of Spivak (1990), Probyn (1990), Weedon (1987), Hekman (1990), Flax (1990) and Smith (1990). Spivak, Probyn, Weedon, Hekman and Flax have all attempted to put feminism into conversation with postmodernism, but not to achieve a synthesis or a dialectic, and certainly not a marriage, with its patriarchal overtones. Furthermore they recognize that these masters of philosophy are probably no more friendly than any of the previous notables, so they are carefully skeptical. Nevertheless, they have all seen advantages to a conversation between feminism and postmodernism. In particular they have all seen liberation in the deconstruction of Western metaphysics, as its internal coherence depends on our exclusion. And they have all noted that postmodernism serves to remind feminism of the dangers of essentialism, of the totalitarian position constructed through oppositional dualities, that in its emphasis on flux and indeterminacy, on the shifting discourses of knowledge and power, postmodernism serves to remind feminism that women are made, not born.

However, what Flax in particular takes issue with is the construction of the self as solely an effect of language or of discourse, which she understands as just another way of privileging male rationality as well as reconstructing a hidden opposition which postmodernism purports to displace. To see the self solely as an effect of language or discourse is to deny the effect on who we are through our relations with others, as well as to deny the effect of art, for example, or empathy. And not least, it serves to remove a place for resistance, necessary if power is to be understood as anything other than a shifting site of domination. The focus in postmodernist theory on power or language or the two together to the exclusion of any theorization of the self which recognizes gender or gender power relations, or in Dorothy Smith's critique, a focus which also excludes the material, as Smith maintains Foucault does, is a focus that needs to be placed in intersection with feminist theory. An inadequately theorized self and a narrow conceptualization of power is not one which can be helpful to my project of understanding women and men as they come to know the organization.

Thus it is in the intersection of feminism and postmodernism, or a feminist/postmodernist approach with a focus on the intersection of discourses of power and knowledge and of gender, gender which is not solely an effect of language or discourse, that I explore how women and men come to know an organization new to them. My focus is on organizations as competing discourses of knowledge and power which are materially based and historically situated. We are involved in the creation of these competing discourses and we are created by these competing discourses, although we are not totally an effect of language or discourse, following Jane Flax. In this understanding, then, there is no concrete organizational reality which can be ascertained from a safe distance, the Archimedean standpoint of the dispassionate observer. Instead, reality is defined by the meaning that organizational members attach to those competing realities which they create and recreate with each other in the process of talking to each other. Neither the subject, nor the meaning, nor reality itself is fixed. All are areas of contestation. As organizational newcomers, we do not learn about a fixed reality. We are all involved, some more, some less, depending on the power that we have, in the creation of a reality that is not fixed, a reality in flux, composed of competing versions embedded in the differences in power of the women and men involved in the creation and recreation of that reality--what we sometimes, if we have power, get to call truth.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

How do new members come to know the organization in which they work? This question is based on an understanding of organizations as discourses of power and knowledge, where what newcomers come to know is inseparable from relations of power and gender, relations which are embedded materially. The statement that organizations will be understood as discourses of power and knowledge rests on several assumptions: that organizations are episodic and unpredictable, that they exist in a constant state of flux and indeterminacy and cannot be determined or defined by the self-aware, fully present human agent, that rationality and purposefulness are a masquerade for the disciplinary practices of gender and power and knowledge which are our organizations and within which we are created and positioned as organizational members.

Within that larger understanding of the organization, then, how do new members come to know and to understand not only the explicit and implicit rules and regulations, superficialities which strike us first and dominate the surface of an organizational culture, a popular metaphor for organizations in the 1980's? More precisely, how do they participate in the on-going creation and recreation of symbolic realities through the formation of meaning, a participation that is mediated by power (Mumby, 1988; Ranson et al, 1980)? How are newcomers both positioned by and created within what Foucault (1979) calls strategies of discourse, or the inextricable intertwining of power and knowledge? I maintain that we don't so much acquire knowledge about the organization, as we participate in the creation of that knowledge of what the organization is—quite a different understanding about knowledge, human nature and power.

Moreover, how do these women and men make the transition from outsider to insider, words which resonate with the implications of the intersection of power and knowledge, words to be deconstructed to reveal the repression inherent in their opposition? How are some condemned to remain as outsiders, while others begin as newcomers and become old hands, the insiders whose discursive strategies dominate organizations always in flux, where the repressed other always returns? How are relations of gender and power and knowledge put into play in these organizations which are themselves discourses of power and knowledge? Organizations, like the societies of which they are a part, are "socially constructed along gendered lines" (Blackmore, 1989, p. 106). What do these conditions of gendered social existence mean to the women and men as they come to know the organization?

Our bureaucracies "are the major ways through which hierarchical relationships of power and authority are erected and maintained" (Britan & Cohen, 1980, p. 2), an insight into the political nature of organizational cultures and its implications for understanding gender power relations that is shared by a number of organizational theorists, sociologists and political scientists (Alvesson, 1987; Blackmore, 1989; Deetz, 1987; Ferguson, 1984; Kersten, 1987; Mumby, 1988; Pettigrew, 1985; Ranson, Greenwood & Hinings, 1980; Smith, 1987; Thompson, 1989). Within this political and cultural understanding of organizations, it makes sense to understand culture in organizations not statically, as a manipulatable variable, nor as monolithic, uniform, or shared, nor as a fixed reality about which one can learn or where one assumes roles, but dynamically, as the ongoing creation and recreation of social realities, mediated by power, and expressed symbolically.

In a pronounced linguistic turn, Dennis Mumby explicitly focuses on the intersection of power and culture as symbolic meaning in his study of communication and power in organizations. To Mumby, organizing is best understood as the creation and recreation of power-based meaning formations, or as the creation of ideology, through organizational narrative (Mumby 1988). Stewart Clegg (1989) goes one step further, removing the last links of language to a fixed reality which the concept of ideology embodies, and advances Foucault's strategies of discourse, where language assumes the pre-eminent place in the process of organizing, where our organizations become an effect of language, of discourses of knowledge and power, discourses within which we are created. How, then, do women and men new to an organization come to know these ambiguous, materially-based socially constructed realities, these discourses of knowledge and power, that both create and recreate gender power relations in the larger society, of which they are a part?

SIGNIFICANCE

Martha Glenn Cox, in "Enter the Stranger: Unanticipated Effects of Communication on the Success of an Organizational Newcomer" (1987), writes that "the precise aspects of speech and behavior that communicate membership or exclusion are relatively understudied" (p. 37). This is one of the very few studies which I have reviewed that deals even tangentially with my topic, although Cox takes a structural-functionalist perspective, quite different from mine. My research study does not focus on the positivist goals of increasing the success of the organization through increasing rationality and efficiency, particularly by creating the conditions by which the flow of information, understood neutrally, is facilitated. It focuses instead on understanding how women and men come to know the organization, and how relations of domination and resistance are created and recreated in the organization, expressed through organizational narrative, and mediated by power.

But all of this involves the reconceptualization of organizational theory from a feminist perspective. Traditional knowledge in organizational literature assumes that what organizations are and what happens there are "free of, uninformed by, and unshaped by" gender and gender/power relations (Morrison, 1992, p. 4). But I maintain that women are the unsettling presence in organizational literature, that both our unseen presence and our unnoted absence impoverishes the discourse as it leads to evasions and repressions, including the polite repression of extending maleness to women, like the Egyptian queen with her false beard. Of the literature that has been written about women and organizations, most falls within the prevailing structural-functionalist perspective which inherently marginalizes women, rendering them invisible (Calas & Smircich, 1989). Little has been written about how women and men might construct "organizational reality through interpretation and interaction in relation to gender and sexuality", although what has been written indicates that "women and men experience organizational life differently" (Sheppard, 1990, p. 141). Nor has there been much written about gender and power: in her critique of theory and educational organizations, a critique which could apply just as easily to the field of organizational theory, Jill Blackmore (1989) observes that: "the focus is on social control, hierarchy and bureaucracy rather than the recognition of the reproduction of gendered dominance as a set of power relations as a significant phenomenon" (p. 114). In particular, this focus is not reflected in the organizational theory written in the United States, from which Canadians draw heavily. It reflects the liberal political and economic assumptions on which it is based, assumptions which deny the relevance of gender and gender power relations and which operate to consign gender to the margins as a rapidly irrelevant individual attribute. If, following Foucault, all theories are discourses of power and knowledge which are historically situated, and specific to time and place, we in Canada have a different history, we are situated differently in terms of time and place, than the countries we draw on so uncritically. I write as a self-consciously—but not all-knowing, fully present—Canadian woman, who has been shaped by both my own history, and the history of my country.

This study is of significance for Canadian organizational theorists in developing our own understanding of organizing and organizations, embedded as we are in a very different history and in a different understanding of human nature and of social relations. It is particularly significant because it looks at women and men in organizations in terms of gender power relations, and how those asymmetrical relations of power between women and men are created and maintained through strategies of discourse. I have attempted to put into conversation feminist theory and postmodernist theory to better understand how we come to know organizations in the way that we do, and what that means for understanding how asymmetrical gender power relations are maintained. My position here is to be evocative rather than to explain or to reflect; I wish to challenge, to interrupt, to displace the violent hierarchies which structure our thoughts so we can think in new and different ways. To quote Toni Morrison, I want to extend the study of organizational theory into

> what I hope will be a wider landscape. I want to draw a map, so to speak, of a critical geography and use that map to open as much space for discovery, intellectual adventure and close exploration as did the original charting of the New World—without the mandate for conquest, I intend to outline an attractive, fruitful and provocative critical project, unencumbered by dreams of subversion or rallying gestures at fortress walls. (1992, p. 3)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURE, POWER AND LANGUAGE IN THE FORMATION OF MEANING

INTRODUCTION

By the 1980's a number of organizational theorists, dissatisfied with previous attempts to explain or predict what we did in organizations and why we did it, began to focus on culture and symbolism. No longer satisfied with describing what organizations were and what happened within them, theorists moved from describing organizations as structures—as things or fixed entities—to describing organizations as processes—from organizations to organizing, as one theorist described it. They took different approaches, drawing variously on positivist, interpretive, and critical theories within the wider rubric of modernism or, much more recently and still peripherally, postmodernist theory to buttress their arguments about why this area should be studied and how it should be understood. Over the course of the decade they segued from a focus on culture as a variable in organizations; to organizations as cultures; to the intersection of culture and power in the creation and recreation of organizational reality; to a refocusing on organizational culture as organizational symbolism, and particularly focusing on language; to organizational culture as equivalent to organizational ideology; to organizations as strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge expressed in language. The debate ultimately concerns questions of meaning, and centers on whether meaning is consensual or whether it is contested; whether it is the reflection of the underlying structure or whether meaning forms structure; whether meaning resides in the exchange of information and is therefore fixed or whether it is constructed by human actors, mediated by power and therefore in a constant state of flux; whether meaning reflects an objective reality or creates the only reality we can know.

All of this, of course, is important to the study of the organizational newcomer—how are we as theorists to understand how we come to know? Are organizations sets of rules and roles which can be communicated—taught to and learned by—the neophyte as empty vessel, or are we all inextricably involved in the creation of conflicting realities, or discourses as Foucault would have it, within which not only our organizations but we ourselves are created? Within these two statements lie very different ideas about the self, about organizations, about power and about language, with very different consequences for how we might understand the organizational newcomer.

OVERVIEW

In their study of organizations Britan and Cohen (1980) advocate the open systems approach adopted in the 1970s as more conducive to the cultural study of organizations than the closed system approach characteristic of the Weberian bureaucracy, but the positivism and determinism of the open systems approach is criticized by Kilduff (1986) and Pettigrew (1985), criticisms which also surface in an article by Smircich (1983) on organizational culture. Smircich (1983) points out that the issue is whether culture can be understood as a manipulatable variable or as a metaphor for organization itself—prefiguring the later emphasis on symbolism and on language—and how the latter approach can best be understood in terms of the various streams in anthropological theory as transposed to organizations. In a later article Meyerson and Martin (1987) look at culture as it is understood by a number of theorists and point out the differences between those who deem culture as something that is shared, monolithic, and thus manipulatable, and those who understand culture in the organization as something that is much more ambiguous: not as seamless, a shared understanding, but as a web characterized by groups who come together and split apart according to the issues confronted.[1]

Riley (1983) and Pettigrew (1985) point out that if organizational theory is going to be more than a functionalist, positivist apology for management, it must focus on the intersection of culture and politics—on power—in organizational theory. Drawing on Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration, Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood (1980) focus more sharply on power and symbolism. They examine the intersection of power and "the provinces of meaning", with its implicit focus on language in the creation of organizational reality, as an "order of domination", harking back to Weber's notion of the organization as an iron cage. This emphasis on language as "a guided interpretation of reality" is explored from a critical communications perspective by Kersten (1987) and Deetz (1987). Alvesson (1987), like Burawoy (1979) and Thompson (1989), draws heavily on the Marxist humanism of Habermas and Marcuse and emphasizes that worker consciousness and workers' understanding of the organization—of the culture—must be located materially, in the actual conditions of work, and adds a long explication of ideology as understood within this perspective. Mumby (1988), who draws on both Habermas and Giddens, takes this intersection of meaning and power in the construction of ideology still further, equating organizational symbolism or ideology with organizational culture. In Mumby's conceptualization ideology rather than culture becomes the metaphor for organizations, but ideology still acts to deform culture, and the Marxist ideal of an undeformed culture or reality remains. Clegg (1989) rejects the traces of Marxist humanism which underscore Mumby's concept of ideology and cultural deformation, instead formulating his arguments regarding language and power within the anti-Enlightenment critique of postmodernism, in particular the poststructuralism of Foucault. He maintains that it is the nexus of power and knowledge expressed in language, or strategies of discursive relations in poststructuralist terms, which are our organizations. As newcomers what we come to know are these strategies of discursive relations, this nexus of power and knowledge within which we are constituted and which constitute what we know. It is this progressive privileging of language in the study of culture intersected by power which I will focus on in this review of the literature.

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[1] However, in a later article by Barley et al (1988) in ASQ the practitioners' view of culture as a manipulatable variable is deemed more influential in the academic journals than culture as a metaphor for organizations.

ORGANIZATIONS AS CULTURES

As anthropologists studying formal organizations, Britan and Cohen (1980) trace our understanding of organizations since Weber and locate the possibility for an anthropological approach, or a focus on culture, to the study of organizations in the open systems theory of the 1970's. They point out that organizations in Weber's terms were understood as closed systems: as logical, rational, efficient, hierarchical, and as focused on formal structure and on the goals of rationality, efficiency and effectiveness. The informal structure was equated with the irrational, and it wasn't until the 1970s ushered in the open systems approach[2] which attempted to understand organizations more dynamically and less as a collection of formal rules, that an anthropological approach which would "consider two related domains of social actions that go far beyond mere formal rules: the informal social system and the relations between an organization and its environment" (p. 14), was possible.

Although Britan and Cohen criticize organizational theory prior to this development of the open systems approach for its inability to deal adequately with the informal structure of the organization as well as its environment, they take for granted the separation of formal structure and informal structure within the organization and the separation of the organization from the environment. Both Kilduff (1986) and Pettigrew (1985) criticize the determinism of the open systems approach and its positivism and functionalism, and maintain that culture in the study of organizations is best understood either interpretively, to Kilduff, or critically, to Pettigrew. Kilduff points out that although "the organization as open system has been the dominant model in the field of organizational studies since Thompson's 1967 influential synthesis of competing theories" (p. 159), that model has been challenged by those who argue that "the field must move beyond the constraints imposed by the mechanical and organism metaphors underlying open systems theory . . . [to] a cultural model of organization emphasizing the use of language and the creation of shared meanings" (p. 159). However, in a review of *Organizational Symbolism* (Pondy et al., 1983), Kilduff notes that the majority of the essays included in the book are still functionalist in orientation: they "focus squarely on the system-maintaining functions that symbols can perform in organizational settings" (p. 162).

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[2] Morgan and Smircich (1980) describe open systems theory in Darwinian terms, where survival of the fittest and power operating as a form of exchange characterize the social polity. They point out that in open systems theory "reality is seen as a concrete process. The social world is an evolving process, concrete in nature, but ever changing in detailed form. Everything interacts with everything else and it is extremely difficult to find determinate causal relationships between constituent processes. At best, the world expresses itself in terms of general and contingent relationships between its more stable and clear cut elements. The situation is fluid and creates opportunities for those with appropriate ability to mold and exploit relationships in accordance with their interests. The world is in part what one makes of it: a struggle between various influences each attempting to move toward achievement of desired ends. Human beings . . . influence and are influenced by their context or environment. The process of exchange which operates is essentially a competitive one, the individual seeking to interpret and exploit the environment to satisfy important needs and hence survive. Relationships between individuals and environment express a pattern of activity necessary for survival and well-being of the individual" (p. 491).

This issue of how culture is to be understood, as a manipulatable variable or as a metaphor, is directly addressed in the introduction to a special issue on organizational culture in *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1983). Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch emphasize that culture should be understood as a metaphor for the dynamic process of organizing, rather than for the static concept of organization. They stress the dynamic nature of culture, stating that "culture—another word for social reality—is both product and process, the shaper of human interaction and the outcome of it, continually created and recreated by people's ongoing interactions" (p. 331). To them, culture as a metaphor "focuses our attention primarily on the processes and artifacts of organizational sense-making" (p. 337)[3]. We are all intimately involved, then, in the symbolic construction of our reality—of our culture, in other words—a theoretical move which brings both symbolism and process firmly to the forefront.

Smircich's article in the same issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1983) is valuable for its clarification of the various ways that culture is understood theoretically, first in anthropology and then as that theoretical understanding is applied to organizational theory. In her analysis she draws parallels between five areas in anthropology and in organizational theory:

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[3] This emphasis on organizational sense-making builds on earlier works, in particular Harold Garfinkel's (1967) focus on skillful accomplishment and Karl Weick's (1979) on enactment. As Gareth Morgan (1986) points out, "shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sensemaking are all different ways of describing culture". He then asks if culture is to be understood as "rule following or enactment" (p. 128)? To Harold Garfinkel, "the most routine and taken-for granted aspects of social reality are in fact skillful accomplishment . . . . We can say that the nature of culture is found in its social norms and customs, and that if one adheres to these rules of behavior one will be successful in constructing an appropriate social reality" (p. 128-129). However, as Morgan notes, culture is more than rule following--how do we know which rule to follow?--and Weick's theory of enactment attempts to answer that question. To Weick "we implicitly make many decisions and assumptions about a situation before any norm or rule is applied. Many of these assumptions and decisions will be made quite unconsciously, as a result of our taken for granted knowledge, so that action appears quite spontaneous. And in most circumstances, the sense-making process or justification for action will occur only if the behavior is challenged". This process by "which we shape and structure our realities" is a "process of enactment", where "we take an active role in bringing our realities into being through various interpretive schemes" that we employ in order to make sense of our world (p. 130). By emphasizing that "we accomplish or enact the reality of our everyday world" we then understand culture not as a static variable, as a possession that an organization has, but as "an ongoing, proactive process of reality construction . . . . an active, living phenomenon through which people create and recreate the worlds in which they live". Organizations, then, are in essence "socially constructed realities that rest as much in the hearts and minds of their members as they do in concrete sets of rules and relations" (p. 131).

between Malinowski's functionalism and classical management theory, where cultures and organizations are viewed as instruments which fulfill human needs; between structural functionalism in anthropology and contingency theory where cultures or organizations are considered adaptive; between shared cognitions and shared knowledge, reflected in ethnoscience in anthropology and in cognitive organizational theory; between symbolic anthropology and symbolic organizational theory, where cultures and organizations are understood in terms of shared symbols and meanings and where she herself stands, and finally, between the structuralism of the anthropologist Levi-Strauss and transformational organizational theory, both of which emphasize respectively that culture and organizations are manifestations of unconscious processes (p. 342).

Smircich stresses that her research focuses on uncovering knowledge structures, or those rules and regulations which make possible working together, and that therefore in symbolic anthropology and its counterpart in symbolic organizational theory, the research task is to interpret "the 'themes' of culture—those postulates or understandings declared or implicit, tacitly approved or openly prompted, that orient and stimulate social activity" (p. 350). However, Smircich's—and others'—emphasis on the notion of culture as shared meanings has been criticized from a number of perspectives. These criticisms do not focus on the cultural metaphor itself but on the notion of consensus and the implication for manipulation, the lack of ambiguity, and more pointedly, an insufficient regard for power, a view underlined most recently by van Wolferen (1990) in his study of Japan's political industrial system.

Donnellen et al. (1986) have stated that Louis (1980), Van Maanen (1983), Pfeffer (1981), Smircich and Morgan (1982) and Smircich (1983) conceptualize organizations "as systems of shared meanings" in which "organizational members act in a co-ordinated fashion as a result of sharing a common set of meanings or interpretations of their joint experience (1986, p. 43), leading to charges that this idea of a shared meaning can be used manipulatively by management. The "cultural engineering" approach of Peters and Waterman (1982), Sathe (1982) and Kilman (1982) provokes Berg (1985, p. 282) to note that the holistic approach which culture promises is undermined by a reductionist emphasis on basic values, shared understandings and norms. Similarly, Kilduff (1986) criticizes Pfeffer for viewing with equanimity "management's manipulation of symbols to increase employee tractability" (p. 161). Alvesson (1987) maintains that Peters and Waterman, like Argyris and McGregor, far from challenging "technological rationality . . . on the contrary . . . reinforce it". Despite their humanistically oriented organization theory, it is "the raising of organization and business efficiency which constitutes the indisputable guiding rule" of their work (p. 234). Meyerson and Martin (1987) examine this notion of shared meaning, emphasizing that although they share the idea of culture as metaphor, they are skeptical of its monolithic and consensual sense. They explore this notion of consensus and instead suggest ambiguity and a dialectical relationship better characterize culture within organizations, pointing out that "all cultural members, not just leaders, inevitably and constantly change and are changed by the cultures they live in" (p. 642), and that culture is a web of negotiated interests rather than a seamless cloth of shared meanings.

CULTURE AND POWER

What is ambiguity and negotiation in the structural contingency framework of Meyerson and Martin (1987) becomes power in Pettigrew's (1985) radical structuralist analysis of culture and power in the study of organizations. His emphasis on the intersection of culture and power is based on his criticism of much of organization theory developed since Weber: for its willingness to adopt the perspective of management, "for its simple-minded positivism where organizational life ends up being 'analysed, paralysed and reduced to a series of quantifiable variables' . . . [for] the crude attempts to develop organizational laws, [and for] the unduly deterministic nature of structural contingency theorists" (1985, p. 28). Instead, Pettigrew calls for an historical, contextual and processual inquiry into organizational dynamics where culture and the human actor take pride of place rather than the static account characteristic of systems analysis. This interest in exploring the dynamic rather than static nature of organizations and his rejection of positivism and functionalism in favour of an historical, contextual and processual inquiry likewise leads Pettigrew to emphasize the importance of power, politics and culture in understanding organizations. Drawing on Weber's concept of legitimacy, Pettigrew explains that:

> The acts and processes associated with politics as the management of meaning represent conceptually the overlap between a concern with the

> political and cultural analysis of organizations. A central concept linking political and cultural analysis is legitimacy. The management of meaning refers to a process of symbol construction and value use designed both to create legitimacy for one's actions, ideas and demands, and to delegitimise the demands of one's opponents. Key concepts for analysing these processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation are symbolism, language, belief and myth. (p. 44)

Pettigrew goes on to point out that it is these concepts which help us to make sense of organizational life, which allow us to understand and thus to act upon a reality which we have created. But rather than leave this conceptualization at the level of a collectively agreed upon culture, Pettigrew argues that if "this unitary concept" is to be given "analytical bite", power must be added in order to fully understand the role of culture and organizations (p. 44).

ORGANIZATIONS AS THE SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY: CULTURE, POWER AND LANGUAGE

In an article that more pointedly makes the link between power and culture in the symbolic creation of reality, Riley (1983) explores the nature of the power structures in the organization and illuminates a dialectic often overlooked between culture and organizational structure, or "the product and process of organizational members' sense making through their ongoing interactions" (p. 333). To Riley, these "'Master structures' [sic], the organization's political themes and images that embody deeper layers of meaning and norms for member behavior, are reflected in individual descriptions. Structure and symbols are seen as both the medium of communication and the outcome of interaction" (p. 333). Riley goes on to explain that structuration—"the process by which the power structure is created"—is linked to the process of culturation described by Berger and Luckmann (1967). These structures are "created through images and the symbolic order", and "express the commitments of the past, institutionalized in power arrangements, and persist into the present by affecting people's behavior. People's behavior, so structured and constrained, recreates the structures that in turn guide thought. Exactly so is culture created, and so does it shape the processes of its subsequent recreation" (p. 334).

Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings (1980) prefigure Riley's approach in their analysis of power and culture, drawing heavily on Anthony Giddens' (1979) theory of structuration and his attempt to reconcile the dualism of agency and structure in the creation and recreation of social reality. Concerned with exploring what they believe to be a false dichotomy between the notions of formal and informal structure in organizational theory, a false opposition between the organizational structure and the interpretations of the organizational members, they uncover the dialectical relationship of the organizational members in creating and recreating the structures of the organization, structures which are the embodiment of their provinces of meaning, mediated by power—or what could be termed institutionalized ideology. This analysis of structure as the institutionalization of power arrangements they label, following Weber, an "order of domination". To Ranson et al (1980), "Power holders have constituted and institutionalized their provinces of meaning in the very structuring of organizational interactions so that assumptions, interpretations and relevances become the generalized interpretive frame, the cognitive map, of organizational members, an interdependence of power and meaning . . . better conceptualized as an 'order of domination'" (p. 8-9). Meaning, then, as expressed in language is a guided interpretation of reality.

This intersection of meaning—Smircich's symbolic construction of reality—and of power is approached from a critical communications perspective by Kersten in "A Critical Interpretive Approach to the Study of Organizational Communication" (1987). Kersten maintains that the study of organizational culture as the symbolic construction of reality and the field of organizational communication share a similar linguistic focus, although the field of organizational communication itself contains some sharply different theoretical approaches to communication. In her description of conventional organization theory, for example, Kersten argues that communication is either limited

> to the transmission of work-related information for the purpose of maintaining existing structures or to motivational processes at the interpersonal and group levels, which also serve to maintain the existing conditions. Communication as a process is reduced to an information transmission activity that takes place in conformity with structural dictates for organizational efficiency and effectiveness, because this is the view of communication inherent in the organization theories adopted by the field. (p. 136)

In an argument that reprises many of the previous criticisms of organizational theory as a whole, Kersten analyses the major problems with the conventional view of communication. It does not take into consideration that through "communication we create our social world and construct meanings for the objects and events around us" and that meaning is purposeful, "simultaneously constructed", and "sustained over time" (p. 137). To Kersten communication is not about the efficient exchange of information by abstract individuals to meet organizational goals; it is instead about the "meanings and interpretations that form the basis for these interactions" (p. 137). She goes on to point out that using the first view of communication "we are left with elaborate and detailed descriptions that, at best, reflect existing organizational structure and their impact on the ways in which people communicate. How people come to create interpretations of and meanings for their own and others' communicative behavior and how and why these behaviors are sustained over time is not, and within this framework, cannot be explained" (p. 137). Instead, within this framework the "overriding concern" (p. 138) is with the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, resting on the "assumption of shared goals, or harmony of interests" between management and workers which "places the field in a position of concealing real conflict and contributing to the perpetuation of conditions of inequality" (p. 139).

To reconceptualize communication in organizations in order to deal with these theoretical lacunae means to reassert "the nature of communication as epistemic, processual and telic", or to emphasize "the creation of meaning and knowledge", and its constitutive and purposeful nature (p. 140). And, following

Habermas, it also involves the recognition that since "communicative interaction does not take place under free, voluntary and equal conditions" (p. 144), it therefore leads to "a system of 'systematically distorted communication'" (p. 145). Kersten argues that we should therefore concern ourselves with "a conceptualization and realization of the 'ideal speech act' . . . [which] can be described as that situation in which social and organizational arrangements are not derived from unequal power differentials but rather occur on the basis of a political process that is arrived at through a domination free communication process" (p. 147).

In a similar argument which focuses on the intersection of language—primary in the creation and recreation of social reality—and power, Stanley Deetz stresses its ideological nature: how "an organization's language may direct, constrain and at times distort members' thoughts and perceptions" (1986, p. 168). This creation and recreation of social reality through language is temporal, rooted materially, and contested:

> Less dominant groups vie for increased power through changing the preferential power of social definition. Both processes of changing definition and processes of order maintenance and extension are not as innocent as they might seem at first glance. While they may appear as friendly negotiations of better ways of describing things, they are connected to and interact with various material determinants of power within the

> organization. The issue is one of preferred expression and thus preferential expression of group interests. (p. 170)*

Not only is language an area of contestation; it has the power to "hide or highlight"—language, then, as a guided interpretation of reality. In much of organizational theory too little attention is paid to "the potentially restrictive and detrimental consequences of particular language systems", too much to the consensual nature of language, to agreement, and how agreement is achieved (p. 173). To Deetz we need to move beyond literal analysis of language, as understanding metaphors only as a "figurative overlay on literal speech that might enhance its rhetorical effect", without understanding how "metaphors contribute to the structure of order" (p. 181), or as J. B. Thompson explains, without understanding the links between language and power. As Thompson points out, "In using language we are constantly engaged in extending the meaning of words, in producing new meanings through metaphor, word-play and interpretation, and we are thereby also involved, knowingly or not, in altering, undermining, or reinforcing our relations with others and the world". Thus, to focus on language "is to study, in part, the ways in which these collective, imaginary activities serve to sustain social relations which are asymmetrical with regard to the origins of power" (1984, p. 6). We think within the words we use, and thus to Deetz the central question becomes "If particular metaphor structures are present, whose and which interests do they serve? If metaphors guide thinking in one way rather than others, who stands to gain from that direction and who tends to lose. . . . What is the relationship between power and economic interests and the selection and perpetuation of metaphors" (p. 181)?

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*As J.B. Thompson (1984) notes in his study of ideology, "Ideas circulate in the social world as utterances, as expressions, as words which are spoken or inscribed. Hence, to study ideology is, in some part and in some way, to study language in the social world . . . . It is to study the ways in which the multifarious uses of language intersect with power, nourishing it, sustaining it, enacting it . . . . To explore the interrelations between the language and ideology is to turn away from the analyses of well-formed sentences or systems of signs, focusing instead on the way in which expressions serve as a means of action and interaction, a medium through which history is produced and society reproduced. The theory of ideology invites us to see that language is not simply a structure which can be employed for communication or entertainment, but a social historical phenomenon which is embroiled in human conflict" (p. 2).

IDEOLOGY AS AN ALIENATING INTERMEDIARY: MARXIST HUMANISM AND THE LABOUR PROCESS THEORISTS

Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings (1980) and Riley (1983) draw on Gidden's theory of structuration—and ultimately on Weber—in their attempts to explain how power shapes our understanding of what organizations are, and how that guided interpretation of reality is expressed in language as an "order of domination"—the outcome of the symbolic creation and recreation of reality intersected by power. Kersten (1987) and Deetz (1987) likewise focus on language and power. However, labour process theorists like Burawoy (1979), Thompson (1989) and Alvesson (1987), operating within the tenets of Marxist humanism, locate worker consciousness much more firmly in the material world—that how we understand the world is shaped by what we do, the basis for the Marxist understanding of class consciousness, the mixed consciousness of the oppressed, and the role of ideology as an alienating intermediary in creating false consciousness. In their work organizations are ideologies which alienate workers from their true selves. Burawoy, Thompson and Alvesson all focus on the material base of worker consciousness, emphasizing worker consent as well as worker resistance, although Alvesson in particular takes pains to explore the dialectical relationship between modernization and that form of rational consciousness which seeks to understand modernization at the same time as it itself is shaped by it.

In *The Manufacture of Consent* Burawoy (1979) argues that the study of ideology must remain focused on work itself in the production of worker consciousness. He stresses that in "the manufacture of consent" workers "make out"—they make the job more bearable—but by doing so they also play management's game. As he notes, "one cannot play a game and question the rules at the same time; consent to rules becomes consent to capitalist production" (p. 161). What Burawoy's emphasis on the manufacture of consent allows for is a dialectic; it would be woefully one-sided to see only worker resistance and management coercion. As Thompson notes, "it would be unwise to present the course of events in terms of a whole transformation of the conditions for conflict and coercion. The ability of capital to organize consent depends in reality on the context of productive activity" (p. 168).

Similarly Thompson argues that ideology "constitutes a lived experience, not just an imposed set of ideas" (p. 154). It is, however, a lived experience that has been ignored, "either because of the stress laid on the changes in the structural features of work, or because traditions of resistance have been emphasized at the expense of day to day reproduction of consent" (p. 154). He points out that in the workplace "it is not just things that are produced, but relations between people. As these relations concern the functioning and distribution of ownership, control, skill, power and knowledge, we are also talking about the production of ideas about these relations" (p. 154). To Thompson, although a number of labour process writers are drawn to Gramsci and his idea of hegemony, "that the control of a ruling class is based on the permeation of a whole system of beliefs, morals and values through the cultural and ideological apparatuses of society and state", the focus must remain on the "wider political terrain" (p. 157) of the workplace in the production of consciousness.

Operating within this same focus on the larger material context, Alvesson (1987) in *Organizational Theory and Technocratic Consciousness: Rationality, Ideology and the Quality of Work* analyses ideology and the ideological nature of much of organizational culture and organizational symbolism research. His view of ideology is based on both Marx and the Frankfurt critical theorists like Marcuse and Habermas: ideology is formed by the elite for their benefit and is furthered by the process of modernization (p. 187). As he points out, his area of analysis is not "political economy and class supremacy but the form of rationality which permeates modern, mainly capitalist society as a result of the culmination of the Enlightenment, [which] changed in time into a positivistic and technocratic view of knowledge, subordinate to capitalism and possessing totalitarian features" (p. 10)*. Like Habermas, he is concerned with the recapturing of rationality for emancipatory purposes. To Alvesson, organizations are "alienating intermediaries, which serve to mystify human beings in their attempt to comprehend and appreciate the nature of the totality in which they live" (p. 19). Therefore the research task is to "demonstrate the sources of alienation within a totality, which converge in a organization context. It provides a systematic critique . . . by identifying the factors which impinge upon and dominate human consciousness in the form of seemingly objective social forces over which man [sic] appears to have no form of direct control" (p. 20). Ultimately we are alienated from our true reality by the distorting influences, rooted in capitalism, of modernization, distorting influences which are embodied in our organizations.

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*Wendy Brown points out that "Marcuse before Habermas, and Weber before Marcuse identified as the most ominous feature of a fully 'disenchanted age' not an immaculate nihilism but a form of nihilism in which 'technical reason' (Marcuse), 'means-end rationality' (Habermas) or 'instrumental rationality'

And it is this ideology of modernization which is also embedded in "organizational culture (-symbolism)" theory (p. 188). Alvesson argues that our present interest in research into organizational culture/symbolism is historically situated: it is the result of the effects of modernization, or "the technocratization and destruction of the traditional cultural patterns" (p. 200); the focus on culture and symbolism indicates "an effort to counteract disintegration problems in society" (p. 201), as does the focus on ideology per se (p. 202).

In order to provide a better understanding of what he terms "technocratic consciousness", Alvesson describes the various views of ideology. To Alvesson there are two basic views of ideology current in the literature; he agrees with

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(Weber) became the dominant and unchallengeable discourse framing and ultimately suffusing all social practices" (Brown, 1991, p. 66).

neither. In the first view, ideology is understood "as consisting of false beliefs and the person holding an ideology as being the victim of delusions. Ideology and irrationality go together. . . . The other view conceptualizes ideology as a set of assumptions and values about the world. Here the term has a 'neutral' meaning and stands for a frame of reference" (p. 145). It is this second view which has found favour because "the ideal of a value free study of social phenomena, a clear separation between science and ideology, between 'truth' and false beliefs is viewed by more and more scholars as totally unrealistic" (p. 145). In other words everyone has an ideology, and since everyone does, power is unimportant. In counterpoint to both these views, Alvesson explores the nature of ideology within a critical perspective, which focuses on power, and quotes from the analyses of Geuss, Giddens (1979) and Held (1980).

Geuss' analysis of ideology as used by the Frankfurt School locates three versions: the positive, where ideology "corresponds to human beings' existential need of meaning in life and/or social needs of fellowship, social solidarity, communication and capacity for productive cooperation" (p. 147); the descriptive, where ideology is understood as a world view, and is "studied in a purely descriptive way"; and the pejorative, where "ideology is viewed as beliefs and forms of consciousness that are misleading, false or distorted. The distortion is of a systematic kind and rooted in social conditions. . . . and is an obstruction for the rational discussion of how the unrepressed social life could be organized" (p. 146).

To Alvesson, rather than maintaining a tenuous theoretical opposition between truth and falsity, a positivistic dualism, this final "view of ideology does not place ideology in a kind of state of opposition to science or objective truth. Ideology is rather placed in relation to the way sectional interests tend to dominate social conditions" (p. 147). As Giddens (1979) states, it is this view of ideology which lends itself to a critique of domination (p. 147), a view elaborated by Held, who

> . . . emphasizes that the Frankfurt School regards ideologies as forms of thought which, due to dominance factors in society, express a limited and distorted view of reality. Ideologies are not, however, merely illusions. They are embodied and manifested in social relations. . . . Ideologies can express 'modes of existence'. Therefore, ideologies are often also packages of symbols, ideas, images and theories through which people experience their relation to each other and the world. The degree to which ideologies mystify social relations or adequately reflect distorted social relations (but thereby mystify the possibility of non-distorted social relations) is a question for inquiry in particular cases and contexts (p. 150).

The critical theorist is thus concerned specifically with revealing how ideologies distort social relations, and therefore is concerned not simply with description, with world views or frames of reference, but with critique. In particular, the critical theorist is concerned that she or he not contribute in any way to "reproducing, legitimizing and reinforcing the prevailing social order and the rationality, aims and conditions of power on which this is based, by further developing, refining and reproducing the ideologies of the dominant groups" (p. 155). That society is constructed unfairly, and that it is the duty of the researcher to expose that, is a given.

In critical theory ideology is not false beliefs as opposed to a true, scientific and objective reality. As Alvesson stresses, his concern is with social conditions, and how these "social conditions (primarily under late capitalism) influence ideas, political discussions, forms of rationality, and needs, as well as to what extent and in what way the rational considerations of individuals with regard to needs, the satisfaction of needs and liberation from 'unnecessary' repression are disturbed by the social conditions (p.150). He wishes to liberate us from the ideology of rational technocracy, the technocratic consciousness which has distorted our understanding of the world in ways that continue to benefit the elite, and which continues to maintain a pernicious social system.

However, there is nothing which would indicate that these various analyses of ideology by Burawoy, Thompson and Alvesson stray very far from what could be termed a Marxist humanist understanding: that ultimately ideology obscures a better reality from which we are alienated by the very presence of these ideologies. Only a classless society, and for Alvesson, like Habermas, incorporating a rationality free from technocracy, would be completely free of ideology. Until that state is reached, our organizations operate as ideologies which alienate each of us from our own true natures. We are caused harm not only because our production is stolen from us, but because our knowledge of our condition is systematically distorted.

ORGANIZATIONS AS IDEOLOGICALLY BASED MEANING FORMATIONS

Dennis Mumby (1988) undertakes to explicate how organizational communication, expressed in language, is systematically distorted to benefit those in power. As a organization communications theorist, he is concerned with how language forms our reality, but he is also concerned with how language deforms our reality—the reality which we create and recreate on a daily basis, and which we call our place of work, but which exists in words. However, he is unwilling to leave the origin of that deformation at the level of the individual, and like Alvesson, whom he draws on, he secures it to a material base. In doing so he attempts to give power an ontology that it lacks in the work that focuses on language as the expression of power but leaves power attached only to individuals who somehow group together to create an 'order of domination'. Thus, drawing on Smircich and the symbolic construction of reality, but understanding organizing from within a Marxist humanist perspective, he analyses organizations as "ideologically based meaning formations" (p. 127), or as the symbolic creation and recreation of organizational reality through narrative, mediated by power, and materially based. Our understanding of the world arises from what we do; we express that understanding in language, but that understanding will be deformed in conditions where relations of power are asymmetrical. Only when conditions are symmetrical will our understanding be undeformed.

As Mumby explains, we produce meaning through communication, and like Deetz and Kersten, he emphasizes that communication is processual rather than representational, and that culture is therefore both formed and deformed. To Mumby, "meaning is neither conveyed through communication, nor is it the product of individual interpretation or an objectively existing entity outside of social interaction. . . . Communication is thus not simply the vehicle for information, but rather is the very process by which the notion of organizing comes to acquire consensual meaning. Organizing is therefore continuously created and recreated in the act of communication among organizational members" (p. 14-15). However, this process of cultural formation is not the only process: cultural deformation also exists. As Mumby points out, "power is exercised in an organization when one group is able to frame the interests (needs, concerns, world view) of other groups in terms of its own interests. . . . As such, the exercise of power is intimately connected with organizational sense-making, which in turn is largely delimited by the communication process" (p. 3). And, as he goes on to note, this process of cultural deformation is ideological, in that "one of the principal functions of ideology is to represent sectional interests as universal, [meaning that] the dominant social groups can maintain their dominance only if their interests are accepted and appropriated universally, even if these interests merely confirm other groups in their subordinate position" (p. 42).

Mumby points out that "organizational reality is socially constructed", but more importantly he stresses that "the construction of this reality cannot be separated from the deep power relations that constitute the material conditions of an organization. . . . The material infrastructure of institutional practices mediates in the way that the 'texts' of such institutions (stories, myths, etc) are interpreted or given meaning by organizational members" (p. 129). This is not only about "the ability of social actors to construct their own reality"; it must be recognized that these considerations are framed "within the context of questions of power and ideology" (p. 129). And as he notes further, the act of interpretation, the way that the organizational members attach meaning to their understanding of the 'texts', is always political—it cannot be detached. To Mumby,

> The interpretive act is one of deconstruction and resistance, struggling against the framing of the world that the text tries to impose on one. The dialectic between reader/listener and text that produces meaning is therefore fundamentally political, as is the act of interpretation. It is through the interpretive process that we make sense of our world, and it is through this same process that our social world is reproduced. Meaning and interpretation, domination and discourse, are thus inextricably linked. (p. xvi).

Mumby carefully explores how these ideologically based meaning formations are created and sustained, and begins by addressing how these are formed intersubjectively. To Mumby, we make sense of our world with others: "the process by which an event becomes meaningful is rooted in and framed by intersubjectively shared patterns of discursive and behavioral practices . . . ensuring the culture's continued reproduction". By intersubjectivity, Mumby stresses that he does not mean how a particular point of view "becomes shared by others" or how the subjective becomes objectified, replicating the duality of Cartesian thought. Instead, drawing on phenomenological and hermeneutical thought, Mumby maintains that "intersubjectivity recognizes that meaning arises in the interaction between subject and object" (p. 10), between who we are and what we know. He goes on to state that "implicit . . . in the concept of sensemaking is the idea that the relationship between members of an organization and their organizational culture is fundamentally reciprocal. Members' behavior both frames and is framed by organizational reality. . . . the process of sensemaking is therefore partial and ongoing, rather than complete and fully constituted. What is considered 'real' is contingent upon the constantly shifting relationship between social actor and organizational environment" (p. 11). Reality, in other words, is dialectical.

Mumby goes on to point out that not only are these meanings formed intersubjectively, but contrary to the notion that they arise spontaneously and consensually, they are

> rather the product of the vested interests of particular organizational groups. Power is exercised by such groups not only in the control of organizational resources . . . but also to the degree that they are able to frame organizational reality discursively in a way that serves their own interests. . . . the dominant interests are taken on uncritically as the interests of all organizational groups. Ideology is thus conceived not simply as a set of beliefs, but as a materially located meaning system that constitutes the social actors' organizational consciousness (p. 157).

Just as he is at pains to structure a materially rather than ideally based sense of organizational meaning, Mumby is also careful that language be understood as not merely the symbolic representation of an objectified reality.

To Mumby symbolism, or communication, of which language is a part, *is* organizational culture—it is not a representation of it. It is through the constant employment of symbolism, rooted in material reality, that culture is created (p. 12). Symbolism in organizational culture is not an abstract notion. It is not separate from organizational culture, according to Mumby, unlike the prevailing view, which "seems to be in favor of a representational view of the relationship between the symbolic and reality", or symbols as "representative of a reality that already exists independently of its symbolic form" (p. 13). Instead of this separation between the abstract nature of the symbolic and concrete reality, Mumby draws on phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions and stresses that

> meaning is produced in communication . . . meaning is neither conveyed through communication, nor is it the process through which meaning is created and, over time, sedimented. Communication—as an institutional form—articulates meaning formations which, when habitualized over time, provide the background of common experience that gives organizational members a context for their organizing behavior. Communication is thus not simply the vehicle for information, but rather is the very process by which the notion of organizing comes to acquire consensual meaning. Organizing is therefore continuously created and recreated in the act of communication among organizational members. (p.14-15)

In Mumby's view, the words we use structure how and what we understand; they do not exist in isolation from the reality of the organization itself. They are the reality.

Mumby understands communication, then, not as the rational, neutral exchange of information, exchanged objectively (p. 6), and understood in its symbolic, abstract sense, but as the metaphor for organizing. In Mumby's conceptualization it is mediated by power, and therefore ideological. To Mumby, ideology is not individual values and beliefs—it cannot be understood without reference to power. Instead "it is rooted in the everyday practices of social actors", in

> the process by which social actors are interpellated (addressed) and the means by which their sense of consciousness of the social world is constituted. Ideology functions to articulate a sense of the world in which contradictions and structures of domination are obscured, and the particular interests of dominant groups are perceived as universal interests and hence actively supported, even by oppressed groups . . . ideology manifests itself and is expressed principally through various discursive practices, and the analysis and critique of ideology must make explicit the connection between relations of domination and systems of signification. (p. xiv-xv)

Ideology is the linchpin, then, between the symbolic construction of reality, and power.

Mumby links communication, power and the formation of ideology and what he terms the deformation of culture to storytelling, or organizational narrative. Although Mumby recognizes that communication is not completely synonymous with language, he maintains that for him "speaking and writing [are] the principle modes of communication in an organizational context", and thus the "organizational narrative [is] one of the principle symbolic structures that shapes reality for organizational members" (p. 15). He stresses that these organizational stories or narratives are not to be thought of simply as "an information conduit for organizational members. Stories do not simply tell people about what goes on in their organizations; rather, they should be examined in terms of their role in creating perceptual environments for organizational members . . . [stories] play a fundamental role in the creation and recreation of organizational reality" (p. 18). He notes that storytelling itself is not to be equated with ideological formation; however, it is a particular kind of signification which "lends itself well to the maintenance and reproduction of certain meaning formations. When such meaning formations function to reproduce the interests of particular groups to the exclusion of others, then narrative functions ideologically" (p. xv). It is in the exploration of organizational narrative, then, that we come to understand organizational cultures as ideologically based meaning formations.

ORGANIZATIONS AS STRATEGIES OF DISCOURSE: THE POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF POWER AND LANGUAGE

Whereas Mumby's analysis rests, somewhat uneasily, still within the tenets of Marxist humanism in his emphasis on ideology and cultural deformation, implying a referential point and a self aware human agent, Stewart Clegg (1989) launches his study of power, knowledge and organizations well within the tenets of the postmodernist or anti-Enlightenment critique. In particular he draws on the French philosopher Michel Foucault and his privileging of language as the expression of "strategies of discourse"*, where power and knowledge intertwine. Clegg argues against any fixed or transcendental reference point from which knowledge can be either discovered or understood, against the notion of the unified self-aware human agent or subject who must separate himself [sic] from the object to be known, and against any notion that either power or knowledge can be fixed in and of itself. Instead, he understands power not as a thing separate in itself—power as sovereign—but as inextricably part of knowledge, expressed in language. This nexus of power and knowledge in language become "strategies of discursive power, where strategy appears as an effect of distinctive practices of power/knowledge gaining an ascendent position in the representation of normal subjectivity" (p. 152). We are constituted in language, we are defined and limited through language, by what "poststructuralists term 'discursive practices': practices of talk, text, writing, cognition, argumentation, and representation generally" (p. 152), a move that positions language securely in the forefront at the same time as it privileges flux and indeterminacy. Nothing is fixed, not power, not knowledge, not language, not subjectivity, because the fixed and unified humanist subject has been shunted aside. In this conceptualization organizations cannot be anything other than indeterminate; what we can know is recursive. We are constituted within strategies of discourse just as strategies of discourse constitute what we can know. There is no position of privilege from which we can know—both the subject and the referential position disappear, and discourse takes its place. Mumby's idea of the formation and deformation of organizational culture through ideology can no longer hold—there is no possibility of a position free from power, no organization which at some point can be free of ideology, no organizational narrative which is uncontaminated, and thus not ideological.

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*I prefer Patti Lather's (1991) definition of discourse as a "word used to signify the system of relations between parties engaged in communicative activity and a concept that is, hence, meant to signal the inescapably political contexts in which we speak and work (p. vii).

In poststructuralism power is understood as all-pervasive rather than sovereign; it is constitutive in the construction of meaning through language. Hence there cannot be a point from which one may judge what is ideological, or decide what is cultural formation, or cultural deformation. Ideology disappears into discourse; strategies of discourse may be points of resistance or points of domination—no discourse is inherently one or the other, no discourse is inherently ideological, or not ideological. As Clegg points out in his examination of meaning, language and power, although early linguists like Saussure argued that meaning or signification was fixed in language by social convention, later theorists like Derrida argued against that position, and maintained that there were

> . . . no fixed signifieds or signifiers. Instead, meaning exists in the difference between relational terms to which current representations will remain contextually and historically stable but with every reason to think that they will shift. Power will thus be implicated in attempts to fix or uncouple and change particular representational relations of meaning, a thrust which develops most explicitly from Foucault's historical ontology of some of the subjectivities which have been constituted through practices of

> power and knowledge. The knowledge that is used to structure and fix representations in historical forms is the accomplishment of power. (p. 151-152)

Nothing, then, is fixed, neither these representations, nor subjectivity, nor power itself. Fixity is the accomplishment of power; it should not be confused with power itself, which can both position and fix. Power is not transcendent; neither does it exist as the arm of the state, as the reification of "disciplinary practices"; nor is it sovereign. As Clegg points out,

> If there is no given elective affinity between discourse, practice and interests, then power cannot be understood as a 'single, all-encompassing strategy'. Power will be a more or less stable or shifting network of alliances extended over a shifting terrain of practice and discursively constituted interests. Points of resistance will open up at many points in the network. Their effect will be to fracture alliances, constitute regroupings and reposit strategies. . . . Central to Foucault's conception of power is its shifting, inherently unstable expression in networks and alliances. Rather than the monolithic view of power as a "third dimension" incorporating subjectivities, the focus is much closer to Machiavelli's strategic concerns or Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a "war of manoeuvre, in which points of resistance and fissure are at the forefront". (p. 152)

Clegg explores organizations as "strategies of discourse", where flux and indeterminacy are privileged, and where power and knowledge, inseparable, are expressed in language. In his conceptualization, unlike Mumby's, there is no position outside of power, no possibility of organizational discourse free of ideology, ultimately no position free of totalitarianism, whereas the idea of ideology used by Mumby and Alvesson rests on its opposite—that there can be a place which is non-ideological, that there exists the possibility of an organization free from deformation. Instead of power nowhere in the organization—the criticism of Pettigrew and the critical theorists of the Frankfurt school—power is everywhere—the postmodernist critique of Foucault. Culture formed by words, organizations that are words, become in Clegg's formulation, organizations which are words that cannot separate themselves from power. We are created—and create—within this nexus of power and knowledge. The iron cage of Weber, the bars of which at least we can see, becomes the normalizing institutions of Foucault where we are imprisoned within ourselves by ourselves.

CONCLUSION

Like many others in organizational theory, dissatisfied with positivism, but critical of interpretivism for its inadequate analysis of power and its inability to deal with gender power relations, I have looked for other theories which would illuminate rather than occlude the process by which we humans organize, and how relations of domination and subordination are constructed and maintained in these organizations. Critical theorists posit a different understanding of human actors than positivism or interpretivism and stress how through social and symbolic interactions, mediated by power and materially based, these human actors create and recreate the organization. We don't so much acquire knowledge about the organization, as we participate in the creation of that knowledge of what the organization is—quite a different understanding about knowledge, human nature and power. In this understanding, communication in organizations becomes the formation of meaning through symbolic interaction and is ideological in the sense of being constituted by dominant groups. The Marxist labour process theorists and the anti-organization theorists situate the organization in the larger society—they add the social context—and stress that human understanding is rooted in a material base—our understanding of the world is shaped by what we do. To use Dorothy Smith's (1987) phrase, they understand the organization as a "node in the relations of ruling", thus explicitly focusing on power as domination, and on both worker resistance and on "the manufacture of consent" (cf. Burawoy 1979, Alvesson 1987, Thompson 1989).

However, postmodernists have criticized the labour process and critical theorist conceptualization of the nature of ideology, knowledge and power. As Clegg makes quite clear in his discussion of language and power in organizations, or more precisely, organizations as strategies of discourse, there is no place which is transcendent, no person, no knowledge, no theory free from relations of power. Neither is there a true self from which we can be alienated by organizations as ideologies, as dominating discourses which ipso facto depend on the ideal of a non-dominating discourse and the self-aware subject.

But neither the modernist nor the postmodernist theories of power and language in organizations speak clearly about gender power relations, which has repercussions for understanding how women and men create and recreate the organization, and how they make sense of it. Much of the work reviewed is based on the illusion, shared by both the abstract individual of liberal and positivist thought and the Marxist worker, of asexuality, although in the theories themselves both the abstract individual and the worker are actually male. And in much of postmodernist writing, the self disappears altogether, to be replaced by language or discourse. In postmodernism gender itself is seen as a social construction in language, a position that is problematic for the study of gender power relations. In postmoderism, like liberalism and Marxism, women disappear. However, it is both women and men who daily create and recreate organizational reality, who experience this reality, and who through organizational narrative, attempt to express their understanding of that organizational reality. Recognizing that it is actual women and men in organizations—that 'man' is not a gender neutral term, and conversely that it is not only women who have a gender—adds a complexity to organizational theory—both modernist and postmodernist—that has been either ignored or denied, a situation which has done little to illuminate how we constitute and how we experience organizational reality, and much to occlude and obscure (cf. Calas & Smircich, 1990). Since organizations cannot escape the consequences both epistemologically and ontologically of the sexual/gender division of labour and the constitution of relations of domination and subordination which that entails, those theories which occlude rather than reveal these consequences and thus which cannot contribute to a better understanding of the constitution of this reality, are inadequate. That leads me to ask a still more basic question which will also be explored in the next chapter: In essence, how gendered is what we know about organizations, how gendered is how we have gone about that knowing, and what are the implications for an organizational theory that can illuminate how both women and men come to know an organization?

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST UNDERSTANDING

INTRODUCTION

Most of us spend most our of days in organizations of some sort or another, a way of life that was unthinkable for most of our great-grandfathers, and much more so even for our grandmothers. But this progressive organizing of our lives and what it means has remained resolutely outside the purview of organizational theory. So even if we subscribe to Weber's analysis of the organization as an iron cage, or glimpse in ourselves the disciplinary consciousness of Foucault which gets us up every morning and off to work—rhythms that are no less surprising because they are still so recent—nonetheless we are left, at least in the mainstream of organizational literature, with little that attends to the perspectives of Weber and Foucault, and even less that attends to gender and power. It could be argued that women no longer experience male power only at home, by fathers, husbands, sons. Now, in an expression of that duality conveniently called public life, women experience male power at work—from private to public patriarchy, as it were. In my focus on newcomers to organizations, I maintain that "coming to know" cannot be separated from relations of power between women and men.

But most organizational literature is silent on that issue of women and men, power and knowledge, even the self-consciously left wing literature. What I wish to do in the development of this conceptual framework is to look first at how feminist theory has attempted to grapple with the liberal ideals which form the philosophical assumptions of most organizational theory, and secondly, I wish to address feminist theory in its analysis of Marxism which forms the basis of much of the left-wing organizational theory—a much slimmer body of work, particularly in North American literature. But in its self-conscious identification with the oppressed, the Marxian analysis cannot be overlooked. How well does either an individualist or a materialist analysis illuminate gender power relations in our organizations? More precisely, can the abstract individual or class as analytical categories stand in for gender as a way of explicating the construction of relations of domination and subordination between women and men in our organizations? Feminist theorists argue that they cannot.

Finally, I wish to develop a more precise understanding of women, men, power and organizations through an analysis of feminist theory as it grapples with postmodernism and the privileging of discourse rather than reason or praxis, and the questions postmodernism raises about the intersections of power, knowledge and subjectivity. If language in the form of conflicting discourses marginalizes people—and my concern is how language marginalizes the less powerful in organizations, specifically women—how do feminist theorists, as they grapple with these questions raised by the postmodernists, help to illuminate this process of marginalization as we come to know the organization? My question might better be stated, then, as: How do women and men come to know these materially based relations of power and knowledge—these strategies of discourse—which are our organizations?

IMPLICATIONS FROM POLITICAL THEORY

What theories about human nature and the structuring of human relations are implicitly contained in political theory, as well as in theories about how we humans organize, for whatever purpose? "You do the cooking, honey, I'll pay the rent" are more than the lines of a well-known song: they contain an implicit comment on the appropriate structuring of human—male and female—relations, just as organizational theories do. In order to illuminate, then, how both women and men come to know the organizational reality that they create and recreate through organizational narrative or discourse, I will begin by assessing Alison Jagger's (1983) epistemological and ontological exploration of liberal and Marxist political theory and their conceptions of human nature in order to better understand the philosophical assumptions of organizational theory.

THE LIBERAL VIEWPOINT

As Jagger explains in her analysis of liberal and Marxist political philosophy and the links between their implicit or explicit conceptions of human nature, knowledge, epistemology and methodology, "every conception of human nature involves a characteristic conception of human knowledge—its sources, its extent and the proper criteria for distinguishing truth from falsity. . . . Commitment to a theory of human nature carries with it commitment to a certain epistemology . . . [which thus] involves at least an implicit commitment to a certain method for understanding social reality and to certain criteria of theoretical adequacy" (p. 355). Exploring the ramifications of this analysis, Jagger points out that liberal political theory relies on "a conception of human nature that is radically individualistic"; individuals are conceived as "essentially separate rational agents" (p. 355) who exercise freedom of choice (Amsden, 1980, p. 32). What separates us from other animals—what makes us human—is our ability to reason, our use of language, our competitiveness, and our "tendency to put self over others" (Tong, 1989, p. 39). Liberal theory is characterized by hierarchical dualities: the mind is privileged over the body, transcendence over immanence, reason over emotion, culture over nature, man over woman (Tong, 1989, p. 131), the public world over the private, where a firm line is drawn between what is public, and therefore subject to political discourse, and what is private, which is not (p. 182)[4]. Liberal epistemology, which originated with Descartes and culminated in the analytic tradition of the late 19th century, thus "views the attainment of knowledge as a project for each individual on her or his own. . . . the attainment of knowledge is conceived as essentially a solitary occupation that has no necessary social preconditions"

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[4] And, as Tong points out, this strict division between the public and the private as to what may be discussed publicly, as it were, has implications for the maintenance of the status quo: "Liberal philosophy maintains the political status quo by drawing a firm line between the public and private realms. This boundary prevents comparisons and contrasts between the life of a family member and of a worker--the kind of ideation reflection that facilitates the development of revolutionary consciousness" (p. 182). Tong goes on to point out that this separate spheres model cannot illuminate women's lives because it cannot grapple with work in the home, so work in the home is deemed natural, private, and therefore unanalysable. (p. 182-183)

(Jagger, 1983, p. 355). Only from above, in God-like transcendence and isolation, then, is it possible to know the world. To Jagger, this

> empiricist strand in Cartesian epistemology culminated in the theory of knowledge known as positivism. According to positivism, the paradigm of knowledge is physical science and positivism has a distinctive view of what constitutes the scientific enterprise and the proper method of scientific discovery. One basic assumption of this view is that all knowledge is constructed by inference from immediate sensory experience. Thus knowledge, that is science, is atomistic in structure and the task of epistemology and the philosophy of science is to formulate the rules for making valid inferences from the basic sense experiences on which knowledge is thought to be founded. . . . The assumption that the forms of explanation appropriate for physics are the only forms appropriate for any explanation leads positivist epistemology to prefer quantificational or mathematical types of explanation. (p. 355)

In positivism, theoretical adequacy is achieved through objectivity and universalism. Objectivity is "the [scientific] inquiry's independence from the subjective values, interests and emotions of those who engage in scientific enquiry or who deal with its results"—the influence of the social realm. Universalism is achieved through intersubjective verification: that "everyone should emerge with the same scientific conclusions" (p. 355). In positivism, therefore, "the good scientist is the abstract individual of liberal political theory" (p. 355-356). In liberal political or moral philosophy objectivity is achieved "insofar as it introduces devices for eliminating the influence of special interests and values" (p. 377-8), for example, in the Archimedean point where the abstract individual stands outside society, detached and disinterested, or in the neo-positivism of John Rawls and his "veil of ignorance", where no one can know where his* interest lies. As Jagger notes, "The aim of these methodological constraints is ultimately the same, to provide justification for the claim that the theories produced by these methods are not biased in favor of any particular social group" (p. 377-8), thus leading to the ideal liberal state as "the impartial protector of the rights of all its citizens" (p. 182). And because they do not present the viewpoint of any particular group, they achieve the twin goals of universalism: "conclusions that are universally applicable and as embodying universal or human values" (p. 377-8).

THE MARXIST COUNTERPOINT

In its view of human nature, its political theory, and its conditions for theoretical adequacy, Marxism exists in counterpoint to liberalism. In liberal political theory the analytical category is the rational individual, radically separate from social relations, and in pursuit of both freedom and liberty, from which liberalism took its name. Knowledge is conceived as an individual project, and both objectivity and universalism are achieved through detachment from the social realm. In comparison, in Marxism the analytical category is class. What makes us human is not our capacity for rational thought but "that we produce our means of subsistence" and thereby, unlike the bees in Marx's famous example*, "we create ourselves in the process of intentionally, or consciously, transforming and manipulating nature". More succinctly, "we are what we are because of what we do" (Tong, 1989, p. 39). As Marx said, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness" (1983, Kamenka, p. 160), which is a major break "with the assumptions of liberalism . . . not just about political economy but about consciousness and language" (Weedon, 1987, p. 27). In Marxism, as Jagger explains, individuals exist

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*I have used the pronoun "his" quite deliberately. I will argue later in this chapter that the construction of knowledge and the male subject who knows are inseparable in Enlightenment or modernist thought, which includes both liberalism and Marxism (cf. Hekman, 1990).

> necessarily in dialectical interrelation with each other and with the non-human world. . . . The essential activity of human beings is praxis and the development of knowledge is just one element of praxis. . . . Knowledge is developed as part of human activity to satisfy human needs. Rather than viewing knowledge as the purely intellectual construct of a detached

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*In *The Politics of Reproduction* (1981), however, Mary O'Brien points out a serious lacuna in the example of the architect and the bee, and the link drawn between consciousness and intentionality, and what is work and therefore analysable, and what is not work and therefore unanalysable. To borrow her term, how is "reproducing Marxist man" to be understood? As she points out, "female reproductive consciousness knows that a child will be born, knows what a child is, and speculates in general terms about this child's potential. Yet mother and architect are quite different. The woman cannot realize her visions, cannot make them come true, by virtue of the reproductive labour in which she voluntarily engages, if at all. Unlike the architect, her will does not influence the shape of her product. Unlike the bee, she knows that her product, like herself, will have a history. Like the architect, she knows what she is doing; like the bee, she cannot help what she is doing" (p. 38).

> spectator, therefore, Marxism sees knowledge as emerging through practical human involvement in changing the world, an involvement which also changes human beings themselves. Moreover, since human productive activity always takes a definite historical form, all knowledge must be seen as growing out of a specific mode of production. (p. 358)

In liberalism, knowledge is value free, the achievement of the detached and rational individual who is neither the product of particular social relations nor the mouthpiece for any one group. It is unmarked by struggles over power because power is either irrelevant or dysfunctional—the truth frees us from power. In Marxism however, knowledge, or "the conceptual framework by which we make sense of ourselves and our world, is shaped and limited by the interests and values of the society that we inhabit [and is] historically determined by the prevailing mode of production" (p. 358). We develop our ideas within our "specific material circumstances", but our ideas are also shaped by our "experiences of those circumstances" (p. 207). It is knowledge that is achieved ineluctably within society, not detached from society, and in a class society therefore bound by class—there cannot be a viewpoint achieved outside class, there is no Archimedean standpoint, no veil of ignorance by which the individual removes himself from his social interests and thereby guarantees his objectivity.

In contrast to the liberal, positivist notion of knowledge as value free and universal, Marxists maintain that knowledge of the world is the knowledge of the ruling class, and while dominant, is partial and thus ideological. As Jagger explains,

> societies have not been characterized by a single set of interests and values. . . . In such a situation, one cannot say that the prevailing world view or system of knowledge reflects the interests and values of society as a whole. . . . The system of knowledge that is generally accepted within a society reflects the interests of the dominant class. . . . In class societies, the prevailing world view supports the interests of the ruling class by obscuring or by justifying the reality of domination. In this sense, Marxism views all existing claims to knowledge as 'ideological', that is, as distorted representations of reality. Only a classless society will produce an undistorted and genuinely scientific representation of reality. (p. 358-359)

This notion that knowledge is the representation of the dominant group's interest has ontological consequences, as Jagger points out. Knowledge, or reality, is perceived differently from the standpoint of the rulers compared to the standpoint of the ruled, or as Jagger stresses, "slaves perceive reality differently from their masters" (p. 359). However, as long as the system is stable, these views of reality by the ruled are prevented from gaining wide currency; and, in addition to control, "the plausibility of the dominant ideology is enhanced by the very structure of class society" (p. 359). False consciousness is the result.

This problem of relativity, unlike the universalism posited by liberal/positivist thought, is a central question for Marxist epistemology. Which group's version of reality is to be preferred, given the distorting nature of class society? In answer to that question, Jagger refers to the "totalism" of Georg Lukacs, who postulates that

> we should prefer the standpoint of that class whose interests at a particular historical juncture most closely approximate to those of the totality of humankind. . . . Classes whose interest lies in perpetuating the existing social order have an interest in perpetuating the myths that justify their own domination. . . . Classes whose interest most closely approximates the interests of the social totality will have an interest in overthrowing the established order. Consequently, they are more likely to construct conceptual frameworks that will reveal accepted views as myths and provide a more reliable understanding of the world. (p. 362)

Jagger points out that Lukacs accepts the Marxist analysis of two opposed classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and "concludes that these two class positions provide the two major epistemological standpoints from which contemporary society may be viewed": from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie life is heaven, from the standpoint of the proletariat, life is hell. She is also careful to point out, however, that

> the workers' standpoint does not automatically provide them with a full, comprehensive and coherent alternative to the ruling ideology; they cannot help being influenced by the dominant world view. But the workers' position in class society forces them to take as problematic what the capitalist class takes as given, for instance, 'the quantification of object, their subordination to abstract mental categories'. According to Lukacs, the standpoint of the proletariat is epistemologically preferable to that of the

> bourgeoisie, because it drives the working class to demystify the myths of bourgeois society and to develop a new world view that will reveal more clearly the real regularities of social life and the underlying causes of those realities, including the causes of its own domination. (p. 363)

But Marxism, like liberalism, is bound by its analytical categories, its conception of human nature, and its conditions of theoretical adequacy. In liberalism the analytical category is the individual, in Marxism the analytical category is class. As a number of feminists have observed, class, with its emphasis on the public and economic nature of oppression, cannot deal either with why it is women who perform the marginalized economic roles in society or with the private and psychological nature of women's oppression. Heidi Hartmann has pointed out that class gives "no clues about why particular people fill particular places. They give no clues about why women are subordinate to men inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way around. Marxist categories, like capital itself, are sex blind. The categories of Marxism cannot tell us who will fill the empty places" (1981, p. 10-11)[5]. Both liberalism and Marxism obscure "important features of women's situation", features, Jagger argues, which are key to the least distorted conception of reality, a reality from which women are alienated (p. 379).

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[5] The vastly increased percentage of women who work outside the home for pay has not "fundamentally diminished men's power over women", the prescription of Engels which was to end women's oppression. "Through the sexual division of labour, patriarchy maintains the subordinate status of women both in the workplace and in the home. In a workplace that is divided into high-paying, male-dominated jobs and low-paying, female-dominated jobs, men earn $1.00 for every $.64 women earn. In the home, working women, but not working men, experience the stresses and strains of the double day. Study after study shows that husbands of working women do not do much more work around the house than the husbands of stay-at-home housewives" (Tong, 1989, p. 181; also cf. Arlie Hochschild, 1988, *The Second Shift: Women and Their Double Day*). *The Globe and Mail* reported recently that in Canada "One study showed . . . that mothers who worked full time also performed 35 hours a week of household work, compared with 11 by fathers" and stated that "women these days frequently perform full

SOCIALIST FEMINISM AND THE FEMINIST STANDPOINT

Socialist feminism is an attempt to illuminate women's situation in contemporary society, an attempt that rejects the abstract individualism of liberal political theory, its epistemology and its methodology in favour of a theory of human nature that is "structurally identical with that of traditional Marxism and so, consequently, is the structure of its epistemology" (p. 369). However, it differs importantly from Marxism in that it assumes that the standpoint of women, rooted in the sexual division of labour—not the sex-blind category of class, an important distinction—and using a revised version of alienation, can reveal a less distorted reality unavailable from the perspective of class alone, and one that theoretically at least, is available to men as well. Iris Young points out that using the sexual division of labour rather than class as an analytical category is crucial, because

> a class analysis calls for only the most abstract discussion of the respective roles of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whereas a division of labour analysis requires a detailed, very concrete discussion of, for example, who gives the orders and who takes them, who does the stimulating work and who

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days of paid work only to be confronted with a day's worth of unpaid work at the end" (p. A1-A2, June 19, 1992).

> does the drudge work, who works the desirable shift and who works the undesirable shift, and who gets paid more and who gets paid less. Clearly, then, division of labor analysis can better explain why *women* usually take the orders, do the drudge work, work the undesirable shift, and get paid less, while *men* usually give the orders, do the stimulating work, work the desirable shift, and get paid more. (Tong, 1989, p. 183-4)

As Jagger points out, socialist feminists, like Marxists, "view knowledge as a social and practical construct and . . . believe that conceptual frameworks are shaped and limited by their social origins. They believe that, in any historical period, the prevailing world view will reflect the interests and values of the dominant class" (p. 371)—and that therefore a reliable world view is not available as long as the existing social order, based on the oppression of various groups, remains in place. Although a distorted reality is a given, however, a less partial and more comprehensive view of this distorted reality is available from the oppressed. Like Marxists, socialist feminists argue that the pain of the oppressed "provides them with a motivation for finding out what is wrong, for criticizing accepted interpretations of reality, and for developing new and less distorted ways of understanding the world" (p. 370). The oppressed class must look at the ruling class as well as itself in order to understand, and thus the standpoint of the oppressed is more comprehensive as well as more impartial because it "represents the interests of the totality in that historical period" (p. 371).

However, socialist feminists differ from Marxists in that they believe that for theory to be an adequate representation of even this distorted reality it must "represent the world from the standpoint of women", not the world from the standpoint of the proletariat. Jagger argues that because of women's particular condition in contemporary society—that "women suffer from a special form of exploitation and oppression"—women "have a distinctive epistemological standpoint", "a less biased and more comprehensive view of reality than that provided either by established bourgeois science or by the male-dominated structure of everyday life" (p. 371). In reply to those who would argue that sex, unlike class, cannot provide an analytical category by which to understand the world, Jagger points out that the evidence for this

> . . . is supported by a variety of arguments: by psychological research, which demonstrates that women's perceptions of reality are in fact different from those of men, by psychoanalytic theory . . . by investigations in the sociology of knowledge, which link the distinctive social experience of women with distinctively feminine ways of perceiving the world; and by feminist critiques of existing knowledge, which reveal how prevailing systems of conceptualization are biased because they invalidate women's interests and promote the interests and values of the men who created them. (p. 371)

Thus, drawing on the implications for women of the sexual division of labour, "socialist feminist epistemology claims that the social experience of women is so different from that of men that it shapes and limits their vision in substantially different ways—in other words, that women's position in society provides the basis for an autonomous epistemological standpoint" (p. 376). Jagger goes on to point out that therefore "the task for feminist scientists and political theorists is to build on women's experience and insights in order to develop a systematic account of the world, together with its potentialities for change, as it appears from the standpoint of women" (p. 376). By using a revised Marxist concept of alienation—we are oppressed because we are alienated not only from both our productive but from our reproductive work as well—from the standpoint of women we can discover what we are alienated from, thus bringing about a way of ending our oppression[6].

Socialist feminists agree with Marxists that "human beings express their humaneness through their productive activity or work" (p. 208)[7], but they extend that idea of work to include the work of reproduction, or as Jagger notes, "the production of people, including the production of sexuality, as well as the historically determined character of the production of goods and services" (p.

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[6] To Jagger, women are oppressed because we are alienated. This analysis differs from that of the liberal feminists, who "believe that women are oppressed insofar as they suffer unjust discrimination; traditional Marxists believe that women are oppressed in their exclusion from public production; radical feminists see women's oppression as consisting primarily in the universal male control of women's sexual and procreative capacities; while socialist feminists characterize women's oppression in terms of a revised version of the Marxist theory of alienation" (p. 353)

[7] In Marxism, because work is seen as the "primary means by which we develop our capacities" as humans (p. 208), alienation and dehumanization are seen as the result of the "capitalist transformation of almost all human relationships into undisguised economic contracts" (p. 197). Because this dialectical relationship between who we are and what we do has been disrupted by the process of capitalism, workers are alienated both from other humans and from themselves. As Jagger notes, "capitalism prevents workers from engaging in the productive activity that is the mark of their humanity, or the activity of transforming nature not just in order to fulfill direct physical needs, as animals do, but for the sake of the full development of human potentialities" (p. 216). What was heretofore dialectical and interdependent becomes, under capitalism, "alien, separated from, or opposed" (p. 216).

303). This productive activity, then, cannot only be seen in terms of class, but in terms of sex as well, as Jagger points out: "It perceives that human productive activity is organized invariably around a sexual division of labor, and that the specific historical form taken by the sexual division of labour has always been basic in determining the historically prevailing constitution of human nature" (p. 303). As women, then, we are alienated not only in terms of class, but as sexual beings, as mothers, and as intellectuals. Under capitalism, as Tong notes, "women's oppression takes the form of her alienation from everything and everyone, especially herself, that could be a source of integration for her" (p. 189). It is by using this revised form of alienation that we can recognize that our "contemporary oppression [is] a phenomenon peculiar to the capitalist form of male dominance. The apparent universality of women's subordination is revealed as taking a form that is historically specific. The framework of alienation moreover, links women's oppression in the home with women's and men's experience in wage labor" (Jagger, 1983, p. 317). Because alienation is rooted not only in the material but the psychological world, if we are to form an effective revolutionary strategy, it must include "techniques for demystifying the prevailing male dominant and capitalist ideology and for developing alternative forms of consciousness, that is alternative ways of perceiving reality and alternative attitudes toward it" (p. 333).

However, this standpoint of women cannot be discovered through naive unreflection because "women's perceptions of reality are distorted both by male-dominant ideology and by the male dominated structure of everyday life" (p.

371). Neither can it "be discovered through a survey of women's existing beliefs and attitudes"; instead it must be

> . . . discovered through a collective process of political and scientific struggle. The distinctive experiences of women generates insights that are incompatible with men's interpretations of reality and these insights provide clues to how reality might be interpreted from the standpoint of women. The validity of these insights, however, must be tested in political struggle and developed into a systematic representation of reality that is not distorted in ways that promote the interests of men above those of women. (p. 371)

Furthermore, argues Jagger, these naive perceptions of reality are the result of what she terms the "mixed consciousness of the oppressed", or the split between their daily experience which "provides them with an immediate awareness of their own suffering" but which does not allow them to "perceive immediately the underlying causes of this suffering nor even necessarily perceive it as oppression. Their understanding is obscured both by the prevailing ideology and by the very structure of their lives" (p. 382). Thus the perspective which reveals "women's true interests" begins from women's descriptions of their lives but "goes beyond that experience theoretically and ultimately may require that women's experience be redescribed" (p. 384). This can only achieved through struggle (p. 384).

Like Marxism, and unlike liberalism, socialist feminism achieves the conditions of theoretical adequacy of objectivity and impartiality by relying on the least distorted perception of reality, which is women's. As Jagger stresses, "the concept of women's standpoint presupposes that all knowledge reflects the interests and values of specific social groups". Therefore, "women's subordinate status means that, unlike men, women do not have an interest in mystifying reality and so are likely to develop a clearer and more trustworthy understanding of the world. A representation of reality from the standpoint of women is more objective and unbiased than the prevailing representations that reflect the standpoint of men" (p. 384). The standpoint of women is also more comprehensive: as the slave understands more of the world than the master, so does "women's social position [which] offers them access to aspects or areas of reality that are not easily accessible to men"—housework, rather than a labour of love, is work, childcare is not only a labour of love, it is work, part-time work is lack of opportunity rather than free choice (p. 384).

Finally, Jagger explores the problem of universalism as it is subsumed in the concept of women's standpoint: does this standpoint of women obscure or occlude in such a way that it contributes to other oppressions based on class or race or age? Just as the standpoint of women is theoretically available to men, it is available to all women through the process of continual struggle whereby some aspects of the social reality of women's lives assume greater importance at various times. To Jagger, "women's oppression is constantly changing in form and these forms cannot be ranked". Therefore "for each of these overlapping groups of women, some aspects of reality may be clearly visible and others may be blurred. A representation of reality from the standpoint of women must draw on the variety of all women's experience. In order to do this, a way must be found in which all groups of women can participate in building theory" (p. 386). To Jagger, this theoretical reconstruction of reality is

> . . . an achievement linked inseparably with a transformation of power relations. . . . In beginning the scientific reconstruction of the world from their own standpoint, women must draw on the experiences of all women. As they do so, their representation of reality will become increasingly adequate—and its adequacy will be tested constantly by its usefulness in helping women to transform that reality. . . . Women's standpoint offers a perspective on reality that is accessible in principle to men as well as to women, although a materialist epistemology predicts that men will find it more difficult than women to comprehend this perspective and that widespread male acceptance of it will require political as well as theoretical struggle. (p. 387)

For Jagger, the concept of women's standpoint rooted in the sexual division of labour and using a revised version of alienation allows for a less distorted view of reality than that available from other standpoints, and it therefore contributes to a more objective, more comprehensive and less partial system of knowledge about the world. However, although Jagger herself is careful to stress that this standpoint is not universal in that it does not pretend that there are no differences between women, and that this standpoint must reflect the shifting and diverse nature of women's lives, lives divided by race, by class, by sexuality (p. 386-7), the whole notion of standpoint, of the privileging of any theory of knowledge or epistemology, is under question. So too are the notions of a fixed reality and a fixed subjectivity, upon which both the notions of standpoint and alienation depend.

FEMINISM AND CRITICAL THEORY, MODERNISM AND THE POSTMODERNIST CRITIQUE

As Marx does to Hegel, postmodernism turns modernism on its head. Like the wings of the owl of Minerva which spread only at the falling of dusk, it is the fullest extension of modernism, incorporating its own critique, demanding its own self-analysis—the fulfillment of modernity, not a new world order. Unlike modernism, in postmodernism it is not whose reason, whose knowledge shall prevail, whose justificatory appeal shall stand, buttressed by calls to objectivity, impartiality, universality, but that no form of reasoning, no knowledge, no justificatory appeal can stand outside relations of power. In postmodernism, modernism as both liberalism and Marxist humanism, capitalist modernism and communist vanguardism (cf. Huyssen, 1990), is criticized for its ideas of the fixed and unified nature of the self and of subjectivity, for its idea of a transcendent reason or a non-ideological position from which a fixed and uncontaminated reality can be known, for its transcendent criteria for truth and falsity, and most radically, for its reliance on epistemology itself, that any theory of knowledge can be privileged. The ideas which inform the Enlightenment become its undoing; in postmodernism, modernism's most "conspicuous features" are radicalized: evolutionism is dissolved, historical teleology disappears, the privileged position of the West evaporates, a "thorough-going constitutive reflexivity" is recognized (Giddens, 1990, p. 52), "functionalism and absolutism" is rejected in favour of a "non-dualistic, non-unitary approach to knowledge" (Hekman, 1990, p. 1). Ultimately, in postmodernism there are no truths, no justificatory strategies—however benevolent their intent—which may be justified outside relations of power, no position of transcendence, no holy war.

CRITICAL THEORY, MODERNISM, AND THE POSTMODERN CRITIQUE

During the 1970s, critical theory, or "'the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age'" as Marx put it, was dominated by Jurgen Habermas and his project, the recapturing of rationality and its emancipatory possibilities for Western thought (Fraser, 1987, p. 31). Andreas Huyssen (1990) argues that this ultimately was a German project, arising out of their own particular history, and maintains that this was well within the confines of modernism. Huyssen argues instead for the "specifically American character of postmodernism. . . . For a variety of reasons, [postmodernism] would not have made any sense [in Europe]. West Germany was still busy rediscovering its own moderns who had been burnt and banned during the Third Reich" (1990, p. 243)[8]. By the 1980s, however, critical theory had shifted from a focus on "the immanent critique of capitalism" by the Frankfurt School, to a "totalizing critique" of the roots of Western civilization (Angus, 1990, p. 21) launched by postmodernists like Lyotard, Irigaray, Kristeva, Foucault and Derrida. This critique of the modern called into question the privileging of reason, of progress, of history as linear and evolutionary, of transcendental, unitary and absolute truth, of belief in the efficacy and coherence of the "grand narrative", of the possibility of knowledge standing outside relations of power, of the ordering of thought through the use of hierarchical dualities, of the transparency of language, the nature of the self and the revelation of reality—in short, of any fixed point from which truth or knowledge could be understood, defined or justified. It is a crisis of authority that calls into question everything necessary to preserve the internal coherence of modernism, every aspect of the structure necessary for modernism to stand.

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[8] He goes on to point out that for Habermas among others, "It was a search for alternative cultural traditions within modernity and as such was directed against the politics of a depoliticized version of modernism, which had come to provide much needed cultural legitimation for the Adenauer restoration . . . . From the depths of barbarism and the rubble of its cities, West Germany was trying to reclaim a civilized modernity and to find a cultural identity tuned to international modernism which would make others forget Germany's past as predator and pariah of the modern world. Given this context, neither the

POSTMODERNISM AND THE END TO THE PRIVILEGING OF REASON, PROGRESS, AND EPISTEMOLOGY OR THE 'GRAND NARRATIVE'

To Anthony Giddens postmodernism is rooted in the anti-Enlightenment critiques of Nietzsche and Heidegger, who criticize modernity by focusing on reason and its link to the idea of progress and evolutionary history: that we can "become more and more knowing about a world that is becoming clearer and

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variations on modernism of the 1950s nor the struggle of the 1960s for alternative democratic and socialist cultural traditions could have possibly been construed as postmodern" (Ibid).

clearer to us", and who "link with modernity the idea that 'history' can be identified as a progressive appropriation of the rational foundations of knowledge" (1990, p. 47). As Giddens points out in his exploration of the roots of modernity in Christianity and the Enlightenment, philosophers replaced "one type of certainty (divine law) . . . by another (the certainty of our senses, of empirical observation); divine providence . . . by providential progress" (p. 48)—God replaced by reason, and reason tied to progress and human happiness.

However, these neat replacements gave rise to problems of their own, problems which resisted the explanatory categories within modernity and which provided the basis for the postmodern critique. The postmodernists maintain that reason is a tautological category in modernity—how can we reason about reason? In postmodernism reason, like science or philosophy, and in particular epistemology, is no longer accorded a position of privilege, of transcendence, is no longer seen as the impartial arbiter of what is truth, no longer seen as an unimpeachable judge of what we can state is knowledge and what is not. Instead the very idea of reason or truth as transcendent or absolute—as outside relations of power—is under attack. The unitary and univocal position of the modern as embedded in reason is seen as a specific regime of power, which is ultimately unable to justify itself outside of the traditions of modernity. As Linda Nicholson points out, the privileging of epistemology, or the general principles of knowledge,

> rests upon the modernist conception of a transcendent reason, a reason able to separate itself from the body and from historical time and place.
>
> Postmodernists describe modern ideals of science, justice and art as merely

> modern ideals carrying with them specific political agendas and ultimately unable to legitimize themselves as universals. Thus, postmodernists urge us to recognize the highest ideals of modernity in the West as immanent to a specific historical time and geographical region and also associated with certain political baggage. (1990, p. 4)

As Gayatri Spivak stresses, reason is no longer the only way to truth; but more importantly, the idea of a unitary or singular truth grounded in the absolute is also under attack. The postmodernists, Spivak points out, have "subjected many of the comfortable assumptions about humanity, knowledge, rationality and progress to disturbing interrogation. But what's distinctive about this interrogation is that instead of using science and reason to get to a clearer truth, these writers have viewed the very idea of truth with extreme suspicion, something to be dismantled, deconstructed" (Spivak in Harasym, 1990, p. 18). Postmodernists deprivilege reason, but they also deprivilege the ideal of Western philosophy, that there can be absolute, unitary truth, that truth can have a foundation.

Thus, this totalizing critique of the bases of western civilization which postmodernism entails is not only anti-foundational and anti-evolutionary; it is also, and most radically, a critique of epistemology itself. As we lost our belief in reason and progress, so we have lost our belief in the "'grand narrative'—the overarching story by means of which we are placed in history as definite beings having a definite past and predictable future. The postmodern outlook sees a plurality of heterogeneous claims to knowledge, in which science does not have a privileged place" (Giddens, p. 2)[9]. Thus in postmodernism all these "tall stories" that we tell ourselves about "scientific rationality, the unification of knowledge, the emancipation of humanity"—all are subject to interrogation and deconstruction (Harasym, 1990, p. 18). Nothing is transcendent. Knowledge or truth is not revealed or discovered through the application of science or reason. It is relationally produced, and there can be no knowledge, no theory, which is innocent of political location.

THE NATURE OF THE SELF, OF EXPERIENCE AND REALITY, AND OF LANGUAGE

As Spivak explains, this rejection of the unitary and the univocal inherent in the postmodern critique means that the nature of the subject and of experience, its relationship to reality, and thus by extension how language is to be understood are all under question. In postmodernism, there is no such thing as an essential unity of the self called self-identity; the rational, knowing, conscious, unified self of modernism is deconstructed, taken apart to show its artificiality which attempts "to hide the contradictions at the heart of human existence" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 99). The Enlightenment tenet that we could know ourselves and know truth or reality through the application of reason—that we could know what we feel and that we could think our way through a situation—is under attack. As Spivak points out, since the Enlightenment it has been thought "possible to have a direct and unmediated knowledge of reality—the reality of nature, and the reality of our own nature. Progress meant that the application of reason, knowledge of reality, would lead to the conquest of natural and social evils and the emancipation of humanity. In Hegel's phrase, we would be more and more at home in the world" (Harasym, 1990, p. 21).

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[9] Even in science, and particularly in the theory of evolution, what had been stated with certainty is no longer certain. In *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and The Nature of History* (1990), Stephen Jay Gould's analysis rests on the denial of evolutionary theory. Human beings--and everything else on this planet--are not here because of progress, we are here because of a lottery: chance, not evolution, defines us. The Burgess Shale, not far from Lake Louise, was first discovered with its inestimable horde of fossils around the turn of the century, but Gould argues that to understand what the rocks contained in anything other than evolutionary or Darwinian terms was unthinkable then.

In other words, modernism entailed a belief in both the transparency of self and of reality—given the right conditions, both were ultimately knowable, revealed through the transparency of language, and these revelations could be applied to the progressive freeing of the world from the ignorance which kept it in bondage. Our experience of the world was ultimately knowable; the link between knowledge and experience was unmediated. But in postmodernism the stability, the unity and ahistoricity of self, language and reality are all questioned; it is deemed impossible "that there is an essential unity of self through time and space termed self-identity and that there is an essential relationship between language and reality termed truth. The notion of a unified, or integrated self, is challenged by reference to the idea that the self is fundamentally split between its conscious and unconscious dimensions" (Tong, 1989, p. 219).

And just as there can be no fixed self, neither can there be a fixed reality which can be revealed by a transparent language. As Rosemary Tong points out, in postmodernism the notion of a fixed truth "is challenged by referring to the idea that language and reality are variable and shifting, missing each other in a Heraclitean flux. Words do not stand for things, for pieces of reality. Rather reality eludes language, and language refuses to be pinned down or limited by reality" (Ibid, p. 220). Thus, influenced by Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, the postmodernists have argued "that direct knowledge of our own nature is inconceivable. . . . All that we can know is what we say about the world—our talk, our sentences, our discourses, our texts" (Harasym, 1990, p. 21), a statement that leaves language clearly pre-eminent in postmodernist thought. Postmodernism, then, is not only about the dismantling of our beliefs in the virtues of rationality, of progress, of the ultimate transparency of our world and of ourselves achieved through knowledge acting as the handmaiden of progress. Postmodernism is as much about the dismantling of modernist ideas about language as they are related to these contested areas of subjectivity, knowledge or truth as it is about the privileging of language itself.

THE POSTMODERN RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF LANGUAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF: DERRIDA AND DECONSTRUCTIONISM, FOUCAULT AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM

The pre-eminence of language in postmodernism has wide-ranging ramifications for how subjectivity—who we are—is understood in the deconstructionism of Derrida and the poststructuralism of Foucault, two variants within postmodernism. As Cooper and Burrell (1988) remind us, the discourse of modernism "sees language as a means of expressing something other than itself. More specifically, it is a metadiscourse which legitimates itself by reference to some 'grand narrative'. . . . In the sense that it 'already knows', modernism is totalizing and controlling" (p. 94). However, the discourse of postmodernism depends not on unity but on difference, on language existing in a state of "irreducible indeterminacy . . . endless and unstoppable demurrage which postmodern thought explicitly places in the vanguard of its endeavours" (p. 98). In postmodernism language cannot refer to the meaning of something which is fixed and which therefore can be discovered or revealed through the transparency of its form; instead language is involved in an endless play of *differance*, a form of "self-reference in which terms contain their own opposites and thus refuse any singular grasp of their meanings" (p. 98).

It is within this larger understanding of language in postmodernism, therefore, that the self is either constructed as a position in language (Derrida), or is an effect of strategies of discourse or disciplinary practices (Foucault). In both the deconstructionism of Derrida and the poststructuralism of Foucault it is language or discourse which is pre-eminent, not the self; it is the relative interpretations of the world by an "observer-community", not absolute or universal knowledge constructed through the "self-elevated position of a narcissistic 'rationality'" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 94), which are of concern to the postmodernists.

In her explanation of how the dismantling of modernist conceptualizations of language affect how we understand the self and subjectivity, Chris Weedon (1987) points out that postmodernism draws on the "structural linguistics of de

Saussure . . . Marxism, particularly Louis Althusser's theory of ideology[10], and the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan" (p. 12). In Saussurean structuralism, language is a self-contained sign system governed by natural laws, an understanding of which Weedon maintains is "fundamental to all poststructuralism. It is Saussure's insistence on a pre-given fixed structuring of language, prior to its realization in speech or writing, which earns his linguistics the title 'structural'. . . . Each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all the other signs in the language chain" (p. 23). Each sign is itself composed of form, or signifier, and meaning, or signified, which are "so fused together that dividing them is impossible"; each pairing of form and meaning—each sign—is unique and invariate, and different from every other sign (Cameron, 1985, p. 139).

However, although poststructuralism "takes from Saussure the principle that meaning is produced within language rather than reflected by language, and that individual signs do not have intrinsic meaning but acquire meaning through the language chain and their difference within it from other signs" (Weedon, 1987, p. 23), it rejects "structuralist pretensions to scientific objectivity and comprehensiveness" (Baldick, 1990, p. 175). In particular it rejects "the existence of a decontextualized and fixed set of signs . . . with determinacy of form and meaning at its core" (Cameron, 1985, p. 140); and it rejects the use of any binary oppositions—like those within the sign itself, and between signs—"as a principle of linguistic structure" (Cameron, 1985, p. 58). And in rejecting any fixed binary oppositions in favour of "a non-hierarchical or 'free play' of meanings" (Baldick, 1990, p. 176) the poststructuralists dispense with the self-present, all-knowing subject of the Enlightenment who speaks directly of an experience that can, at least theoretically, be fully understood by the subject. In particular the poststructuralists dispense with the idea that meaning or knowledge originates with the subject, that the subject can know, and that an object can be known. In short, the poststructuralists dispense with the subject/object duality which is the basis for the modernist understanding of how knowledge is acquired and who can acquire it. The rejection of these binary oppositions has far reaching consequences, which Allen and Young point out: "every form of subject-object epistemology, including the phenomenological distinction between the constituting subject and the experience it constitutes . . . objects, understood as entities existing apart from language, and consciousness, posited as the origin of meaning, and as that to which signs refer, [all] disappear" (1989, p. 5). By doing so, the poststructuralists maintain two things: that language "far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us" and that since "meaning . . . is not fixed by the natural world . . . but socially produced within language, plural and subject to change", it cannot be "guaranteed by the subject which speaks it" (Weedon, p.

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[10] In contrast to Gramsci and Habermas, both of whom draw on the statement of Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* "that the ruling ideas of every epoch are those of the ruling class", (Weedon, p. 161), poststructuralism draws on Althusser, who rejects economism. Althusser maintains, instead, "that there is a strong relationship between ideology and politics on the one hand and the economy on the other, such that ideology and politics are a 'condition of existence' of the economy . . . ideology acts specifically as a condition of existence, which varies according to each mode of production" (p. 162). It "achieves its effect by placing and adapting people to their structural roles as 'bearers' of social relations. It does this by constituting individuals as particular types of subjects in a structure at the same time as it conceals from them their role as agents of that structure" (p. 163).

23). The subject can no longer know, rational man who has been the focus of modernist discourse; in postmodernism the focus now shifts dramatically to the discourse itself.

DERRIDA AND DECONSTRUCTIONISM

Jacques Derrida has criticized the metaphysical categories of dualism, phonocentricism, logocentricism, and phallocentrism implicit in the modernist conception of language, which his theory of deconstruction as "the deconstitution of the founding concepts of the Western historical narrative" attempts to free us from (Harasym, 1990, p. 31). In this theory Derrida takes

> a philosophically skeptical approach to the possibility of coherent meaning in language . . . [He] claims that the dominant Western tradition of thought has attempted to establish grounds of certainty and truth by repressing the limitless instability of language. This 'logocentric' tradition sought some absolute source or guarantee of meaning (a 'transcendental signified') which could centre or stabilize the uncertainties of signification, through a set of 'violent hierarchies' privileging a central term over a marginal one: nature over culture, male over female, and most importantly speech over writing. The 'phonocentric' suspicion of writing as a parasite upon the authenticity of speech is a crucial target of Derrida's subversive approach to Western philosophy, in which he inverts and dissolves conceptual hierarchies to show that the repressed or marginal term has always already contaminated the privileged or central term. (Baldick, 1990, p. 51)

Deconstructionism challenges the idea "that the 'true meaning' of any text can ever be arrived at"; instead no meaning "is counted more basic than any other, and there is no end to the process" (Cameron, 1985, p. 140). It also challenges the idea that meaning can reside outside language in some external reference point; language is not transparent, and it cannot reveal meaning, or "provide us with the meaning or essences of objects, concepts or persons somehow located outside of it. Rather language creates meaning, the only meaning to which it can refer. Because there is no being (presence) to be grasped, there is . . . no nothingness (absence) with which to contrast it" (Tong, 1989, p. 222). Freed from presence/absence, being/nothingness, or any of the other oppositional hierarchies which structure how we think, Derrida argues that "we would find ourselves free to think new and different thoughts" (p. 222). Only without the dualism of Enlightenment hierarchies which confine as they order, the logocentricism or the "one best way", and the phallocentricism, or the privileging of Western man, can we resist the imposition of order which imprisons us. As Allen and Young (1989) explain, this also erodes the modernist focus on the subject as all-knowing:

> The notion of the subject as unity, a point of origin that knows itself immediately and wills its desires in the world, is understood by Derrida as the product of the metaphysical hierarchy that privileges presence. The metaphysics of presence seeks to collapse time into a series of nows and to deny linguistic spacing by imagining meaning as there all at once. Metaphysics preserves the priority of the subject by generating hierarchical dualisms in which the orderly and rational rule and expel the

> deviant, the disparate, and all that resists classification: subject/object, self/other, mind/body and identity/difference. Philosophical efforts to comprehend the whole in its unity undermine themselves by inevitably positing their own outside. The purity of any clearly defined category thereby depends on what it excludes, and the setting up of symmetries and complementary oppositions legislates an idealism that conceives the truth and being of things as lying outside time, space and history. (p. 7)

Thus free from the confinement and repression of oppositional dualities, the logocentricism and phallocentricism which privilege the all-knowing, unified self, Western man who is the star of his own show, Derrida instead offers us the "concept of *differance* in which meaning is produced via the dual strategies of difference and deferral", where "the effect of representation, in which meaning is apparently fixed, is but a temporary retrospective fixing" (Weedon, p. 25), what Derrida terms the "play of *differance*". *Differance* combines "'difference' and 'deferral' to suggest the differential nature of meanings in language" where meaning is ceaselessly deferred or postponed; language becomes then "an endless chain or 'play of *differance*' which logocentric discourses try vainly to fix to some original or final term that can never be reached" (Baldick, 1990, p. 52). Rather than the repression that is inherent in the fixity of necessary dualities, we have the freedom of play, where nothing can be finally irrevocably defined, including ourselves.

FOUCAULT, POSTSTRUCTURALISM, AND STRATEGIES OF DISCOURSE

Weedon argues, however, that Derridean deconstruction "does not spell out the social power relations within which texts are located", which has implications for understanding not only how the subject is constructed, but how power and knowledge are to be understood as well (1987, p. 25). Both Derrida and Foucault recognize that the subject is constructed as a position in language, reinforcing that language is both "the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness . . . the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested" and "the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed [which]. . . . implies that it is not innate, not genetically determined, but socially produced" (Ibid, p. 21).

It is here, however, that Foucault's poststructuralism takes a different turn from deconstructionism. We are constructed not only in language, whereby both meaning and consciousness are always indeterminate, in the play of *differance*, but in strategies of discourse which position us at the same time as they produce our understanding of the world. Foucault's notion of discursive strategies or practices is rooted in his formulation that there can be no knowledge outside of relations of power, no place where we can step outside of our society "with its own particular mechanisms for producing truth" (Diamond & Quinby, 1989, p. x). Power is all-pervasive; what we call knowledge is not "the discovery of truth, i.e. the traditional dictum in science and philosophy", but "a net-like organization of practices and discourses that society ends up calling knowledge. . . . [which] is produced by heterogeneous practices of power (Calas & Smircich, 1991, p. 5). Our subjectivity cannot lie outside of this nexus of power and knowledge expressed in language; as Biddy Martin puts it, "Foucault insists that our subjectivity, our identity and our sexuality are intimately linked; they do not exist outside of or prior to language or representation, but are actually brought into play by discursive strategies and representative practices" (1989, p. 9).

To Foucault, power is not removed by disintering meaning from the inherent totalitarianism of Enlightenment dualities and rendering it free in the play of *differance*—Derrida's course. Instead Foucault insists that "'power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere'" (Woodhull, 1989, p. 168). It is "'not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous'" (Sawicki, 1989, p. 189). Power is not singular, a fixed entity, sovereign and located in one central point, as in the power of the state, where society is policed through prohibitions and thou shalt nots, where power is maintained through punishment. Instead power is disciplinary and capillary-like, seeping everywhere, widespread and diffuse, a network of representations and normalizing institutions which produce a self-policing subject in a "'society of normalization' . . . governed less by legal rights than by the authority of the human sciences" (Diamond & Quinby, 1989, p. 196), where our subjectification is our subjection (Hekman, 1990, p. 71). Thought and action, knowledge and administration, are knitted together in "the normalizing disciplines" of medicine, education and the sciences of 'man' which "not only articulated new forms of intellectual categorization and theories of experience and behaviour, but structured and were structured by new liberal humanist practices of bureaucratic administration, institutional medicine, schooling, work regulation and penal incarceration" (Allen & Young, 1989, p. 6). Schools and factories, prisons and hospitals all resemble each other, their administration as well as their function serving the same purpose, Bentham's Panopticon reincarnated in the supervisor's desk. As Sandra Bartky (1989) reiterates, the difference between the two ideas of power lies in the difference between punishment and discipline:

> In older authoritarian systems, power was embodied in the person of the monarch and exercised upon a largely autonomous body of subjects. . . . Power in such a system operated in a haphazard and discontinuous fashion; much in the social totality lay beyond its reach. . . . Modern society has seen the emergence of increasingly invasive apparatuses of power: these exercise a far more restrictive social and psychological control than was heretofore possible. . . . Power now seeks to transform the minds of the individual who might be tempted to resist it, not merely to punish or imprison their bodies" (p. 79).

Just as knowledge cannot be separated from power in Foucault's analysis, neither can the subject—the three are inseparable. To Foucault the subject is constructed as the effect of strategies of discourse, where power and knowledge intertwine to produce a disciplinary "regime of truth" focused on the body, "the site of domination through which docility is accomplished and subjectivity constituted" (Diamond & Quinby, 1989, p. xi), and in particular focused on our sexuality, shaped not through repression but through control. Foucault traces how "the idea of the subject . . . has been constructed within Enlightenment humanism, which took a self-reflective turn to construct 'man' as an 'object of knowledge'" (Allen & Young, 1989, p. 6). As an object of knowledge, 'man' was then uniquely susceptible to the disciplinary practices which emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which were based on a new "cultural self-understanding" (p. 6). Discourses arising from the new disciplines of education, medicine and the sciences of 'man', Allen and Young point out, "structure a modern form of subjection through disciplinary practices that constitute persons as isolatable individuals who enact their own self-controlling order. Power, in this modern form, has a particular locus in the body, not primarily limiting or restraining bodies, but through microprocesses of social interchange that direct the body's energies toward production, including the production of power" (p. 6). Our sexuality, as inextricable from our subjectivity, is, in Foucault's analysis, immediately interesting: rather than understanding our sexuality as "a circumscribed domain fundamentally opposed to power and the law, we must see that "our sexuality has been forcibly articulated by power, not silenced"; our sexuality has been made the "truth of our being that knowledge must try to discover" (Woodhull, 1989, p. 168). The nexus of power and knowledge in which we are constructed does not deny, for example, our sexual expression, but creates "the forms that modern sexuality takes" (Sawicki, 1989, p. 182). Rather than suffering from repression, Foucault argues, we suffer from being classified recursively: "deviancy is controlled and norms are established through the very process of identifying deviant activity as such, then observing it, further classifying it, and monitoring and 'treating' it" (p. 182-183). As our sexuality is controlled rather than repressed, so are we disciplined rather than punished; our subjectivity—the "truth of ourselves"—becomes an effect of strategies of power and knowledge, the confessional linked to scientific discourse.

Thus Foucault is concerned not only with the play of meaning, where free from the repressive dualities of the Enlightenment we may contemplate the infinite possibilities of indeterminacy and thus free ourselves, but with why those particular meanings, and most particularly why we structure our thoughts in the way that we do, knowing that the way we formulate the question guarantees the answer. Why do we choose that particular way to think? To Foucault power precedes in its covert structuring of who we are and how we think, weaving and reweaving power, knowledge and the self ever more tightly together, strategies of discourse both the expression of the weave itself and the interweaving means.

Foucault's strategies of discourse, where power, knowledge and the self are intimately and inextricably linked in a dance of discipline rather than punishment, Derrida's deconstruction of the fixed and hierarchical dualities of the Enlightenment which hold us in bondage, the focus on the inconsistencies of supposedly coherent systems of thought, the denial of a fixed reality and the transparency of language which can reveal it, an end to the privileging of the all-knowing and unified self, of the accessibility of experience or of our sexuality as a source of truth, of progressive reason as embodied in the grand narrative: all of these are offered by the postmodernists as strategies for liberation, as ways of ending the ordering of the self and the perceived world in confining, hierarchical dualities, as ways of examining the nexus between power, knowledge and the self in ways that modernism, with its unexamined metaphysical categories, cannot.

THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF POSTMODERNISM

However, how critical is the critical theory of the postmodernists—how ambivalent is the relationship of postmodernism to feminism? As feminists, how do we challenge oppression, how do we chart a course for change, without a coherent, unified position, a story that explains our past and tells us what to do in the future? How do we understand power that is everywhere and thus nowhere, power without an ontological status? How do we understand the "endless play of *differance*", and the indeterminate meaning and the indeterminate self, as other than liberal abstraction and the denial of the body rewritten in a new and more subversive discourse? In our haste to move beyond oppositional dualities, are we forgetting history, and confusing the physical with the metaphysical? In all this talk about space, where are women, women's voices, and women's defined bodies?

How, for example, do the postmodernists avoid charges of incoherence and relativity, charges which have political implications for groups like feminists wishing to establish truth claims in order to better their position? Will not this abandonment of coherence result in "an individualist politics" where political alliances are impossible, where allegiances based on generalizations are unsustainable (Nicholson, 1990, p. 6-7)? Do not the politics of interpretivism and its inherent relativity, or as Sandra Harding (1990) puts it, her majesty's loyal opposition, do nothing more than maintain Western man as the star of his own show?[11] Seyla Benhabib argues that when there is no criteria of validity, where everything is always relative, why will one particular set of discourses not continue to be privileged over another in actuality (Ibid, p. 7)? Is power rather than reason to be the last court of appeal? What are the political implications resulting from the postmodern denial of all boundaries, all fixed entities—including that of the body—inherent in the theory itself?

Susan Bordo (1990) contends that is not the invocation of endless difference a sophisticated rewrite of the abstraction of liberalism, where everywhere becomes nowhere, where the repressive mask of pluralism remains in place? And will not the erasure of the situated self, reflected in the postmodernists' "description of the body as fragmented, changing, and inviting a 'confusion of boundaries'" result in liberalism and the notion of the transcendent self simply rewritten, Cartesian transcendence replayed as disembodiment (Nicholson, p. 8)? In Rosemarie Tong's analysis, both postmodernism and liberalism share solipsism and skepticism, the result of their common "devaluation of bodily activities and functions", a devaluation which results in the abstract individual of liberalism or the incoherent self of postmodernism[12] (1989, p. 35). The consequences of this devaluation, Bordo points out, are that "since we real human beings possess bodies of limited mobility and flexibility, to portray them as otherwise is ultimately to negate them" (Nicholson, p. 8). Whether we incorporate it into theory or not, the human body is situated in space—we don't dance in anyone else's body except our own. As Bordo stresses, "human understanding also possesses necessary boundaries and rigidities. . . . Reality may be relentlessly plural and heterogeneous, but human understanding and interest cannot be" (p. 8). We exist corporeally; we can not get away from who we are, our own perspective; our body limits us (Bordo, 1990, p. 140). Moreover, it was women in the liberation movements of the 1960s who first pointed out the political implications of position, who brought back to earth the category of 'human', gave him a pair of pants, and reminded him that he wasn't the only "player in town" (p. 137). It is easier, Bordo reminds us, to disregard the body when one has no experience of being defined as a body, but one that historically has not been the experience of women.

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[11] Harding makes the point that interpretivism "discounts feminist knowledge claims in scientific and everyday contexts. It does so by taking the position that while feminists certainly have a right to their interpretation of who contributed what to the dawn of human history, or why rape occurs, or the causal role of family forms in historical change, that is just their opinion. The conflicting interpretations by nonfeminists are equally defensible. . . . They then go on to insist that since there is no way to decide 'objectively' between the two, there is no reason why people who are not already convinced of feminist claims should support them. This position functions to justify the silencing of women/feminists no less than its objectivist twin by refusing to recognize existing power relations of male dominance and the dynamics that insure intimate relations between partial and perverse beliefs and social power". (p. 88)

Whereas to Bordo postmodernism is another version of the liberal denial of the body, and just another way of eliminating a standpoint in order to reinscribe transcendence, to Naomi Schor (1989) postmodernism, like liberalism, is blind to history, blind because again like liberalism, it denies the reality of the body, underestimating "the full political weight of the categories . . . in its desire to get beyond the opposition male/female" (p. xviii). To deny sexuality and gender is to privilege those actually in power, which Schor argues both Barthes' erasure of sex and Foucault's desexualization do, and to subvert the liberatory possibilities of history. To pretend that we do not live in a culture structured by gender is to create further oppression, and to Schor we must remember our duty as historians and anthropologists before we set out for the promised land. We must hold open

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[12] As Tong explains, "political solipsism is the belief that the rational, autonomous person is essentially isolated, with needs and interests separate from, and even in opposition to, those of every other individual. Political skepticism is the belief that the fundamental questions of political philosophy--in what does human well-being and fulfillment consist, and what are the means to attain it--have no common answer" (Tong, 1989, p. 35).

> for now a space that has only begun to be explored: the pitch black continent of what patriarchal culture has consistently connoted as feminine and hence depreciated. Before tearing down the cultural ghetto where the feminine has been confined and demeaned, we need to map its boundaries and excavate its foundations in order to salvage the usable relics and refuse of patriarchy, for to do so is perhaps the only chance we have to construct a post-deconstructionist society which will not simply reduplicate our own. (p. 58)

We must be historians in order to be strategists, and strategists in order to be utopians: to Schor, "whether or not the 'feminine' is a male construct, a product of a phallocentric culture destined to disappear, in the present order of things we cannot afford not to press its claims even as we dismantle the conceptual systems which support it" (p. 58).

Linda Singer's (1989) analysis of Foucault follows Schor's in that she concentrates on Foucault's curious and ultimately unsettling analysis of sexuality and power, one that remains confined by a subtext of woman as the object, man the teller, woman the silent one, startlingly reminiscent of Edward Said's (1978) analysis of Flaubert's equation of the Oriental woman with the Orient, and framed by assumptions of female passivity and male voyeurism. To Singer, "Foucault's failure to consider male dominance as one of the effects produced by the circulation of sexual discourse results in a series of strategic recommendations that circumvent the issues of greatest concern to feminists" (p. 138). Although she is careful to point out that "much of what Foucault writes is useful for developing liberatory strategies for addressing the political paradoxes that accompany the hegemony of sexual [discourse], we must also avoid identifying ourselves with what, in some sense, is yet another paternal discourse which claims pre-emptive entitlement to speak to and for women in their absence" (Ibid). Thus, Singer points out, "Foucault's textual strategies often appear to be at odds with his stated purpose, recirculating the very forms of authority he aims to displace" (p. 147). Theoretically, to Foucault power is everywhere—there is no position outside of, or innocent of, power relations. His concern is not with power as a unitary concept, but with the "proliferative dimension of power, which operates through a network of variable and context specific social relations, each of which results in the creation of local authorities and points of resistance to them". There can be, then, no liberatory strategy, "no discourse which cannot be contained by existing political deployments" (p. 141). But by denying women a voice, by speaking authoritatively for women, by evincing no awareness of specific differences, although Foucault claims to focus on differences rather than on the unitary, he reconstitutes "self-effacing masculinity as a unitary voice of authority" (p. 149). And, as Singer points out, if Foucault's concern is not with the unitary but rather the proliferative strategies of power, his lack of attention to differences and specificities would not seem to be consistent with his overall theoretical goals. If, in Foucault's terms, to attack the sovereignity of power is to decapitate the king, he often forgets that the king is a man (p. 148).

Thus, these theorists ask, lacking the strength of generalization, causality and order, unable to argue for the efficacy and coherence of the grand narrative or for progressive reason, will the deconstruction of oppositional categories, the denial of the universal, the denial of the body and the denial of the fixed and unified self lead to liberation—or merely reinscribe the status quo?

THE FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST POSITION

In short, how helpful are the theories of postmodernism to feminism? A number of feminist theorists contend that postmodernism in its anti-Enlightenment critique frees feminist theory, not by denying or redefining epistemology and ontology, but by deconstructing and displacing them. In that deconstruction and displacement of epistemology and ontology doubt, skepticism, constant interrogation, the recognition of marginality and the silence of the other as well as the speech of the self is incorporated—and more than incorporated, demanded. Postmodernism is not a political movement, a grand narrative teleological in its intent of achieving social justice; it is corrective and critical, specific, contextual and historical—as we advocate our own position, we cannot forget our own position, our own privilege, in relation to others. Postmodernism forces us to recognize that we cannot fully know the world through the power of our reason, nor can we fully know ourselves. We must always ask, what has been left out? What can we not see, what have we forgotten, what have we never known and cannot know?

Gayatri Spivak, the translator of Derrida's *On Grammatology* , maintains that deconstructionism and feminism are more than compatible—they are a necessary strategic alliance, opening up feminism as a liberatory strategy at the same time as it forces feminism to confront its own metaphysical categories, its own unanalysed logocentrism and dualisms. Her concern lies with the totalitarianism of the fully coherent, the fully self-evident; thus to Spivak what postmodernism offers to feminists is the eternal vigilance of the critic focusing on the complicated shaping and reshaping of the nexus of power and knowledge. It does not allow for "fundamentalisms and totalitarianisms of any kind, however seemingly benevolent". It functions instead as a political safeguard, to remind us that "the worker" or "the woman" do not exist; "there are no literal referents". By itself, Spivak notes, postmodernism cannot found a political program—its strength is that it is "a corrective and critical movement" (Harasym, 1990, p. 61-62). It is a strength that feminist theory cannot afford to forego as it attempts to construct a way of understanding the world that makes central the concerns of women.

Spivak disagrees with the arguments of those who maintain that if there is no room for the grand narrative, for a coherent account of the world which in its construction necessarily eliminates just as it includes, then there is also no room for understanding, for coherence, for causality in the service of reason in the construction of a way of understanding the world, and ultimately, of course, no place for a political platform based on the concerns of women. Spivak is quite careful to separate the idea of a grand narrative and all that it entails and exactly what postmodernism attacks or calls attention to. The easy opposition of absolute versus relative is irrelevant in postmodernism; what we search for is not the defining category of absolute versus relative truth, but the space of the spectrum. As she explains, a grand narrative "has an end in view. It is a programme which tells how social justice is to be achieved". Spivak does not demand that grand narratives be abandoned, only that theorists recognize that perfection is unattainable, and not just unattainable, unwanted. As she stresses, the postmodernists, rather than getting caught up in teleology, "imagine again and again that when a narrative is constructed, something is left out. . . . So I think what they are about is asking over and over again, What is it that is left out? Can we know what is left out" (p. 18)? The postmodernists are concerned not with the itinerary of retrieval, but "the itinerary of silencing", of those who have not spoken (p. 31). To Spivak, in it in these "moments of doubt that a poststructuralist finds moments of enablement. Since we are not looking for a perfect analysis, but we are looking for a mark of vulnerability which makes a great text not an authority generating a perfect narrative, but our own companion, as it were, so we share our own vulnerabilities with those texts and move. It seems to me that those are the places where we would begin to question" (p. 27).

Postmodernism does not demand the elimination of the construction of a coherent, causal account of the world; it instead calls attention to what is always left out, who is always silenced, to our own inextricable involvement in the production of that narrative, to our own vulnerability. Postmodernism sees all of these as moments of enablement, as places where we begin to question rather than as places where we begin to construct the perfect, the final, solution. We must recognize the limits of our constructions, recognize that "rather than establish the narratives as solutions for the future, for the arrival of social justice" we must work "within an understanding of what they cannot do, rather than declaring war" (p. 18-19). What postmodernism demands is not that we jettison any attempt to construct a coherent account of the world, but that we incorporate into our grand narratives, our explanations of the world, our causal judgement, the interrogative, so that statement and question, incorporation never possible, remain in constant tension. What we must remember is that we "dance critically on the edge of every narrative pointing out the silences, pointing out the unspoken, undescribed others that are implied in each of these narratives" (p. 19).

The postmodernists also remember that this construction of a grand narrative is literally that, an attempt at understanding; it is not an uncovering of reality, as Spivak stresses. Instead, the postmodernists "are interested in looking at the limits of narration [and recognizing that] the narrative takes on its own impetus as it were, so that one begins to see reality as non-narrated. One begins to say that it's not a narrative, it's the way things are" (p. 19). If we must always be skeptical, does that mean that we must throw away causal judgment, and with that political understanding? Spivak replies that skepticism does not imply that we cannot think causally. But it does imply first of all that we recognize that "one quite often substitutes an effect for a cause when one is thinking causally. That is a way of being aware that causal thinking has its own limits", and that "generally causes are produced as effects of effects" (p. 23). And secondly, we have to recognize that although "one can't judge without causal thinking" it does not follow that we can then "ground the cause that one has established for the analysis into a certainty" (Ibid). What we must remember is the state of incompleteness. What we must resist is closure, not coherence, causality or involvement, as she points out : "to an extent there's always that further question . . . one shouldn't want to close off that discussion, one should be able to say, 'Look, I'm putting my interests scrupulously on the table, that is what we can do at the moment, but there you are'" (p. 32).

The postmodern refusal of absolutism or universalism does not mean helpless relativity, in Spivak's eyes. It does not mean that everything—and therefore nothing—is considered, but that we must always keep in the forefront of our minds not the search for the universal answer, but that we are inextricably involved in the production of our own narrative, and that acknowledgement involves us in our own interrogation at the same time as we are involved in our own statements and explanations. To Spivak it means "not that you should consider all other subjects. I was saying that you might want to entertain the notion that you cannot consider all other subjects and that you should look at your own subjective investment in the narrative that is being produced" (p. 32). It means redrawing a circle so that an opening is always there for doubt, for skepticism, for a recognition of privilege. What have I been able to say because of my privilege that others have not been able to say? If we fix our glance at the uncertainty which is implicit in this practice we might be able to "look for a bit at what is being edited out, and then perhaps we shall be able to engage productively in what is called affirmative deconstruction, with what the nature of that uncertainty is" (p. 21).

As some have charged, does postmodernism demand that we dispense with rationality as inherently oppressive? To that question Spivak replies that it is not that the project of rationality is equivalent to oppression, but that nothing is immune from the searching glance which recognizes limits. To Spivak, the rationalist project has failed, not because it hasn't achieved self-understanding, but "because it has not acknowledged that self-understanding is impossible" (p. 30). However, if we agree that self-understanding is impossible, then what? If we agree that we cannot reason our way into understanding through knowing ourselves, then what? To Spivak, we have to give up logocentricism, phallocentrism, give up the idea that we can be the hero who finds the global solution, no matter how perfect our reasons, no matter how enlightened the solution. As Spivak stresses, the postmodernists wish to investigate

> the rationalist narratives of the knowing subject, full of a certain sort of benevolence towards others, wanting to welcome those others into his own—and I use the pronoun advisedly—into his own understanding of the word, so that they too can be liberated and begin to inhabit a world that is the best of both possible worlds. In the process, what happens is that such a world is defined, and the norm remains the benevolent originator of rationalist philosophy. . . . The hero of this scenario, of this narrative, has been in fact Western man. (p. 19-20)

In other words, this hero thinks that through the power of reason he can fully understand the world and himself—no part of the world or his involvement in it remains obscure due to the power of his reason, but at the same time he remains the centre of his own story, but blind to his position. Instead, we should "try to behave as if [we] are part of the margin. [We] should "try to unlearn [our] privilege"—whatever privilege we feel we have of class or race or gender or the infinite number of other privileges that confer on us the right to speak and on others, silence (p. 30).

These are all admissions of incompleteness, an admission of incompleteness which Spivak applies in a particular way to the construction of feminist theory. To Spivak, to combat the logocentrism which is inherent in the construction of a grand narrative which does not recognize incompleteness, which seeks, instead, closure—the fixity of absolute truth—what we must do is to unlearn "our privilege as our loss". Asked the question, "How is it possible to avoid a politics of representation, speaking for or on behalf of other women, retaining their specificity, their difference, while not giving up our own?" she answers that by "unlearning our privilege as our loss" we become aware of the other; we become aware of the one who has been silenced as we speak. But she cautions that this is a difficult project: "It will not come through benevolence, it has to be charted out very carefully, step by step" (p. 9).

To charges that feminism is by its very nature essentialism, Spivak returns again to the tenets of deconstructionism, and stresses that by recognizing always the incompleteness of our argument, we can maintain feminism as a political strategy without making it inherently oppressive. To Spivak, we have

> to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism, universalism . . . But strategically we cannot. Even as we talk about feminist practice . . . we are universalizing, not only generalizing, but universalizing. Since the moment of essentializing, universalizing, saying yes to the onto-phenomenological question is irreducible, let us at least situate it at the moment, let us be vigilant about our own practice and use it as much as we can rather than making the totally counterproductive gesture of repudiating it. (p. 11)

By itself, Spivak notes, postmodernism cannot found a political program—its strength is that it is "a corrective and critical movement" (p. 61-62), one that demands space for the silenced, one that deprivileges not only speech over writing, the phonocentrism which Derrida decried, but speech over silence. Like the tracks in the snow which obliterate what might have been to which Derrida has referred, Spivak returns us constantly to the silence that has not spoken, the silence which is obliterated by our words, the silence within which we must construct our own feminist narrative.

Like Spivak, Linda Probyn (1990) is concerned with voice and privilege—how may we speak without silencing the other? But if Spivak draws on Derrida and the deconstruction of Western metaphysics, in particular the binary polarities or "violent hierarchies" which imprison us, Probyn draws on Foucault and his notion of the hierarchical ordering of knowledge. She asks that if we do not draw on Habermas with his presumption of equality in speech, that measured conversational dance where first one and then the other leads, where everyone hears the same beat, then on whom do we draw in our desire to create the conditions where everyone who speaks, is heard? How can we recast conversation, knowing that nothing is fixed, that the question is not 'how can I state so clearly that you understand completely what I mean', but rather how may I speak without silencing you? To Probyn the crucial question feminists face is how to deal with the combined politics of location and voice, which Spivak alludes to with her somewhat cryptic remark of "unlearning our privilege". How, "in creating our own centers and our own locals"—our own voice—do we remember and deal with the fact that in doing so, we "displace others into the peripheries of our making" (p. 176)? How may we speak, not only for ourselves but for others, without the site from which we speak a source of oppression?

To Probyn the question is can the subaltern speak, Gramsci's term for the subordinate with its colonial and military heritage, and from where? Or does this question fail to even render the investigator visible, and if remaining hidden, powerful? If the subaltern speaks, is this speech only to provide knowledge for the investigator, so the subaltern is visible, but powerless, as Said (1979) maintains? Can the colonizer ever hear? Can the subaltern speak in the language of the colonizer? Can the subaltern ever remake the language, or must it always remain a foreign tongue? Must the subject always be hailed, "interpellated" in Althusserian terms, or are meanings and subject positions much more fluid and thus never "completely guaranteed", to draw on Valerie Walkerdine's idea of the fluidity of discourse and the absence of any fixed position (p. 184)[13]? In taking that position, are we freed?

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[13] As Probyn notes, "Against the poststructuralist assertion that we are 'always-already positioned', Walkerdine wants to introduce a more fluid model of subject formation. In thinking about how we are positioned by gender, class and race, she questions the ways in which (subculture) researchers tend to take 'discourse at face value'. We can no longer take the meanings of discourses for granted and must turn to the ways in which individuals may be differently positioned by them. Gendered practices (within the home, at school, the use of media, and so forth) can therefore not be read off the surface; their meanings to individual women and possible political articulations are never completely guaranteed" (p. 181). Probyn further explains that to be interpellated does not necessarily indicate any form of fixed position by referring to women and the family, seen by many feminists as both a source of oppression and a source of pleasure: "In recognizing a locale we see both the regulation of practices and why these practices in themselves might also be the source of mixed pleasures. This model does not seek to reify those practices; on the contrary in Walkerdine's formulation, it is to question 'how we struggle to become subjects and how we resist provided subjectivities in relation to the regulatative power of modern social apparatuses'. This is also to remember that we negotiate our locales and that we are continuously working to make sense of and articulate both place and event. Moreover, as we approach others' locale we must keep in mind that women are never simply fixed within locale. We may live within patriarchy but at different levels, and in different ways the struggle to rearticulate locale

To Probyn, the answer to Spivak's question—can the subaltern speak?—rests on the answer to another, more basic question, one which focuses on the constitution of "the epistemological constitution of knowledge, the ontology of the questioning subject, and the conjunctural question of where and how we may speak" (p. 177). This question is best answered in the early work of Foucault, where "the historical construction of knowledge" is revealed (p. 184), and where it is pointed out that knowledge is fixed in relation to the other, the lesser, where the other is occluded. Probyn describes this as a process of ordering, where "through a process of location, of fixing statements in relation to other established statements . . . knowledge has come to be ordered. It is through this process that the knowledges produced in locales are denigrated as local, subaltern and other. Foucault's complex model of power suggests that these subaltern knowledges are not directly oppressed but are merely occluded; they are not brought to light and silently circulate as women's intuition, ritual, and even, instinct. Thus, these experiences are rendered outside of the 'true' and the 'scientific'" (p. 185). How then can we bring to light "the submerged conditions that silence others and the other of ourselves" (Ibid)? To Probyn "the subaltern's situation is not that of the exotic to be saved. Rather her position is 'naturalized' and reinscribed over and over again through the practices of locale and location. In order for her to ask questions, the ground constructed by these practices must be rearranged" (p. 186). How do we do that? To Probyn, we begin at the end point, and ask ourselves what has been disqualified as knowledge,

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continues" (p. 182). Thus we must "temper a vision of strict interpellation with the recognition that discourses are negotiated" (p. 182).

what has never been spoken, how do we deconstruct the closed meanings to make way for what we know?[14] It is then that the subaltern can speak.

If Probyn is concerned with opening up a place for the subaltern to speak by reinscribing what we know as knowledge, by peeling away what is considered to be the truth to reveal the supports that require the hidden and the silent, Chris Weedon is concerned with how gender power relations*, where women's interests are subordinate to those of men, "are constituted, reproduced and contested" through postmodern understandings of language (1987, p. vii). These gender power relations take the forms of "the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live" (p. 2), forms which are rooted materially, and expressed in language. As Weedon puts it, "How women understand the sexual division of labour, for example, whether in the home or in paid work, is crucial to its maintenance or transformation. Discourses of femininity and masculinity bear centrally on this understanding and it is in this sense that language in the form of various discourses is . . . the place in which we represent to ourselves our 'lived relation' to our material conditions of existence". And these representations are mediated by power, as she goes on to state: "How we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects, and how we give meaning to the material social relations under which we live and which structure our everyday lives, depends on the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them and the political strength of the interests which they represent" (p. 26). But she goes on to stress that although poststructuralism recognizes the "material nature of ideology, or in poststructuralist terms, discourse, the importance of economic relations of production, [and] the class structure of society", that does not mean

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[14] As Probyn explains,"the local exists nowhere in a pure state. The local is only a fragmented set of possibilities that can be articulated into a momentary politics of time and place. Against the postmodernist gesture of local, feminism can render the local into something workable, somewhere to be worked upon. This is to take the local not as the end point, but as the start. This is not to idealize the local as the real, but to look at the ways in which injustices are naturalized in the name of the immediate. In conceiving of the local as a nodal point, we can begin to deconstruct its movements and its meanings. Thus, in thinking of how locale is inscribed on our bodies, in our homes, and on the streets, we can begin to loosen its ideological effects. . . . In looking at how location disqualifies certain experiences, we begin to realize that the knowledge of locale is important and powerful" (p. 187).

*As Weedon explains, "As feminists we take as our starting point the patriarchal structure of society. The term 'patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. . . . Patriarchal power rests on the social meanings given to biological sexual difference. In patriarchal discourse the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm which is male. Behind the general unwillingness, except among feminists, to rethink the sexual division of labour and its implications for the equality of women and men lies a fundamental patriarchal assumption that women's biological difference from men fits them for different social tasks" (p. 2). Weedon goes on to point out that "To say that patriarchal relations are structural is to suggest that they exist in the institutions and social practices of our society and cannot be explained by the intentions, good or bad, of individual women or men. This is not to deny that individual women and men are often the agents of oppression but to suggest that we need a theory which can explain how and why people oppress each other, a theory of subjectivity, of conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions, which can account for the relationship between the individual and the social" (p. 3).

> that discourses and the forms of social power which they legitimize are necessarily ultimately reducible to the capital-labour relationship, even in the last instance. In any particular historically specific analysis, this may indeed be the case. There is, however, space within this poststructuralism for other forms of power relations, such as gender and race, which must not necessarily be subordinated to class analysis, although questions of class and the interrelation of forms of oppression will often be crucial to the

> analysis. Like Althusserian Marxism, feminist poststructuralism makes the primary assumption that it is language which enables us to think, speak and give meaning to the world around us. Meaning and consciousness do not exist outside language. Stated in this way, poststructuralist theory may seem to resemble a range of humanist discourse which take consciousness and language as the fundamental human attributes. Yet in all poststructuralist discourse, subjectivity and rational consciousness are themselves put into question. We are neither the authors of the ways in which we understand our lives, nor are we unified rational beings. For feminist poststructuralism, it is language in the form of conflicting discourses which constitutes us as conscious thinking subjects and enables us to give meaning to the world and to act to transform it. (p. 31-32)

What poststructuralism does incorporate into its theory is not vulgar economic determinism, then, but an understanding of history and change, and ultimately of hope: by focusing on language and its relationship to power, poststructuralism offers "a way of conceptualizing the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness which focuses on how power is exercised, and on the possibilities of change" (p. 19).

Weedon herself draws on Foucault and his understanding of how meaning is created, rather than Derrida and his theory of deconstruction, which "looks to the relationship between different texts" (p. 22), but does not address the "power relations of everyday life" (p. 25) in which these texts are located. To Weedon, Foucault, with his emphasis on the historical construction of knowledge, provides a way to understand power at the same time it provides a place for women to speak. As Weedon stresses, Foucauldian theory "looks to historically specific discursive relations and social practices. . . . In this theory the meaning of gender [for example] is both socially produced and variable between different forms of discourse" (p. 22). Meaning, then, is constituted within language, is historically specific, and is contested, as Weedon notes: "We need to view language as a system always existing in historically specific discourses. Once language is understood in terms of competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply differences in the organization of social power, then language becomes an important site of political struggle" (Weedon, p. 24).

In developing a feminist poststructuralist critique of social relations Weedon ultimately moves toward a very different conceptualization of the subject and of experience along with a rejection of any standpoint, or privilege, from which reality is to be defined (cf. de Laurentis, 1989). As Weedon points out, poststructuralism is an epistemology that sublates ontology, the humanist conception of the subject decentered, and neither the Archimedean standpoint of liberal political theory nor the socially embedded standpoint of the Marxists is relevant. Discourse as the site of political struggle is where meaning and subjectivity are constructed, but neither are fixed. Meaning is constantly deferred and subjectivity is neither unified nor fixed—it is socially produced, and remains relational, socially specific, and historical. The unified subject of both liberal and Marxist humanism—the point from which we understand the world—does not exist. Instead, it is the "site of disunity and conflict" (p. 173). As Weedon explains:

> For a theoretical perspective to be politically useful to feminists, it should be able to recognize the importance of the subjective in constituting the meaning of women's lived reality. It should not deny subjective experience, since the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society. Theory must be able to address women's experience by showing where it comes from and how it relates to material social practices and the power relations which structure them. It must be able to recognize and account for competing subjective realities and demonstrate the social interests on behalf of which they work. This involves understanding how particular social structures and processes create the conditions of existence which are at one and the same time both material and discursive. In this process new modes of subjectivity become available, offering the individual both a perspective and a choice, and opening up the possibility of political change. Yet theory must also be able to account for resistance to change. This requires a theory which can encompass differences in subjectivity and different degrees of coherence between subject positions, from, for example, institutional attempt to impose and monitor an all encompassing perspective, as in Catholicism, to subjectivity as the unsystematized accumulation of 'common sense' knowledge. (p. 9)

To Weedon, "subjectivity is of key importance in the social processes and practices through which forms of class, race and gender power are exercised" (p. 173); poststructuralism, by positing a non-essential subject, offers feminism a way of dealing with the myriad discourses of power that modernism, with its essentialist subject, cannot.

If subjectivity is constructed, then how is experience to be understood, in the same way as subjectivity, as temporarily fixed, and mediated by power? We cannot deny the importance of people's experience, "since the way people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society" (Weedon, p. 8). However, within poststructuralism, unlike socialist feminism for example, experience is also understood as only temporarily fixed. It is not "the source of true knowledge", a belief that rests "on the liberal-humanist assumption that subjectivity is the coherent, authentic source of the interpretation of the meaning of reality" (p. 8), an assumption which forms the basis for the feminist standpoint. Weedon argues that experience is socially constituted; it

> has no inherent essential meaning. It may be given meaning in language through a range of discursive systems of meaning, which are often contradictory and constitute conflicting versions of social reality, which in turn serve conflicting interests. This range of discourses and their material supports in social institutions and practices is integral to the maintenance and contestation of forms of social power, since social reality has no meaning except in language. (p. 34)

This emphasis on deferred meaning and on socially constructed subjectivity and experience is crucial to understanding poststructuralism, the intersection of language and power, and how forms of domination and subordination are embedded in social relations. It is an emphasis which is also crucial for feminists, because, as Weedon points out, "the existence of patriarchal structures requires a theory which can explain how and why people oppress each other, a theory of subjectivity, of conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions, which can account for the relationship between the individual and the social" (p. 40), which can recognize change in social relations, and which does not posit timeless, ahistorical oppression. In poststructuralism a focus on language, power, deferred meaning and decentered subjectivity intersect to produce a theory helpful to the feminist project of understanding gender power relations and formulating strategies for resistance and change.

Weedon is most concerned with how gender power relations are constituted in discourse: she focuses on postmodernism more for its impact on our conceptualization of language and hence on our subjectivity than for its impact on our understanding of the intimate links between who we are and how we come to know. But Susan Hekman (1990) argues that it is there where the most radical implications of postmodernism lie: that when we deconstruct knowledge, we deconstruct gender and the gendered subject, that we can't let loose the moorings of one without letting loose the moorings of the other. Absolute and unitary knowledge and the essentialism of the male subject who knows are inextricably bound, and to deconstruct one as the effect of oppositional dualities is to deconstruct the other as well.

In his deconstitution of the founding myths of Western thought, Derrida employs both logocentrism and phallocentrism; he deconstructs and displaces not only the dualism of how we come to know, the subject/object opposition which structures our search for absolute truth or knowledge, but he also deconstructs the dualism which informs all the other dualisms—the opposition of male to female and its extension to rational man versus irrational woman, the [male] subject who can know and the [female] object which can be only be known[15]. Hekman argues that the absolutism of foundational truth and the essentialism of the [male] subject are obverse sides of the same coin: both are the result of the dualities which underlie Enlightenment thought. To "displace the rational/irrational dichotomy" of modernism means losing not only "the search for the one, correct path to truth", but also "the gendered connotation of certain ways of knowing" (p. 39). It is not only logocentrism which Derrida deconstructs, knowledge unitary, absolute, foundational, but phallocentrism. The subject who knows who can only be male, the underpinning of Western metaphysics, is deconstructed in this move, *differance* applied to both what we call knowledge, and to what we call, using those familiar oppositional terms, the sex and gender of the subject. If meaning, or truth, or knowledge resides in the play of *differance*, in a constant state of deferral, never fixed except in a temporary retrospective fixing, always multiple, so does the meaning of the sexed and gendered subject.

Hekman argues that both feminists and postmodernists maintain that we need a different way of describing how we humans acquire knowledge; both attack how the acquisition of knowledge has been understood. In the modern age reason was used "to establish absolute and universal truth" by the subject who was "the self-conscious guarantor of all knowledge" (p. 63). But the postmodernists attack these modern ideals of absolute knowledge and the all-knowing, self-present subject. To them, "knowledge is not acquired through the abstraction of an autonomous subject from a separate object"; rather, "knowledge, along with subjects and objects is constituted collectively through forms of discourse" (p. 63). To the postmodernists, all knowledge is hermeneutic (p. 135); thus the absolute/relative dualism which serves as the basis for the justification of knowledge in the Enlightenment is irrelevant when the ideal of absolutism, the notion that truth can be grounded, is itself displaced. Truth is multiple, hermeneutic and constituted in discourse; it is not singular nor unitary nor foundational, and with that move none of the charges of absolutism, relativism or nihilism are relevant, because these are notions which depend on the idea of foundational truth.

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[15] To Hekman,"the Enlightenment defined 'epistemology' as the study of knowledge acquisition that was accomplished through the opposition of a knowing subject and a known object . . . . Feminists reject the opposition of subject and object because inherent in their opposition is the assumption that only man can be subjects, and hence knowers . . . . Postmodernists reject the oppositions because it misrepresents the ways in which discourse constitutes what we call knowledge" (p. 9).

If there is no absolute truth, an effect of opposing the subject to the object, the knower to the known, neither can any of the other opposing dualities which structure the subject stand: the fully constituting subject as opposed to the fully constituted subject, active as opposed to passive, essential man as opposed to essential woman, biological sex as opposed to socially constructed gender. In her explanation of why women cannot be the subject in Enlightenment thought, why the subject and essential man are inextricably bound, Hekman points out the links between the desire to determine the essential nature of woman and the desire for absolute truth. She maintains that a goal of Western philosophy has been "to define the essential nature of women and thereby to determine her proper social role. This effort is an outgrowth of the foundational, existentialist impulse that has characterized Western philosophy since its inception. The effort to definitively identity women's true nature is part of the desire to ground knowledge, and hence social life, in the absolute and indubitable" (p. 135-6). Furthermore, nature is linked to women, and opposed to culture and men; irrational woman is opposed to rational man. Thus in Enlightenment epistemology the male subject as knower, the "rational man" who knows, are inseparable; if the internal coherence of Enlightenment thought is to be maintained, woman is always object, man is always subject.

To Hekman, the impact of postmodernist thought means that to redefine the masculinist subject of the Enlightenment to include the woman who knows would be to retain the prison of the Enlightenment dualities which inherently define woman not only as the Other, but the lessor; its internal coherence, as Jane Flax (1990a, b) has pointed out, depends on our exclusion. We are the necessary Other which provides stability to the whole edifice of the self-constituting Cartesian subject who is what we are not. Neither can we revalorize "women's ways of knowing", because in doing so we construct another essentialist position which merely privileges the woman as opposed to the man, but does nothing to dismantle the prison which we both inhabit. It only changes our rooms.

Moreover, to continue to think in oppositional terms of sex and gender[16] is to maintain these same dualities, to replicate the opposition of the subject and the object, the knower and the known, to maintain the links between absolute knowledge and the essentialist subject who is male. Hekman contends that freed from these dualities, these fixed links, we would think of ourselves in new and different ways: "We don't have to think in terms of sex or gender, biology or social construction. Rather, we can think in terms of biological sex as something that we understand through social categories . . . Biological sex and socially constructed gender are not separate or opposed, but rather form an integral part of what we are as individuals. . . . We are of course, sexed beings, but that biological fact is always understood socially and culturally. It can be understood in no other way" (p. 142). We need to think in terms of the non-oppositional and the non-hierarchical, we need to formulate "a discourse that articulates women and sexuality in radically different terms" (p.150) if we are to displace, rather than merely redefine, the epistemology of the Enlightenment. We need to "displace the active/passive dichotomy that informs the modernist distinction between the constituted and constituting subject" with "a subject that is both constituted and capable of resistance, linguistically constructed yet revolutionary" (p. 93). Following Irigaray, for example, we could favour an "epistemology that is pluralistic rather than hierarchical, where there is

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[16] In a fascinating book, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (1992) Marjorie Garber takes apart our commonly held notion that even if we

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can accept the notion that gender is socially constructed, that our biological sex is certainly fixed. Garber argues that biological sex is no more fixed than gender; it is the reality under which we live which has force, not the one "revealed by anatomical inspection after death" (p. 204). To Garber, "one of the most important aspects of cross-dressing is the way in which it offers a challenge to easy notions of binarity, putting into question the categories of 'female' or 'male', whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or constructed. The current popularity of cross-dressing . . . represents . . . an undertheorized recognition of the necessary critique of binary thinking . . . ." (p. 10).

neither subject nor object, where "'oneness' would not be privileged", an epistemology which "rejects the masculinist definition of the subject that is unitary and rooted in a hierarchical dichotomy" (p. 83).

Hekman argues forcefully that deconstructing Enlightenment epistemology which opposes the subject who knows to the object to be known, displacing that oppositional duality in Derridean terms, means of necessity deconstructing the basic dualism which informs all Enlightenment thought: the opposition of male to female. With that move, it is not only knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge which must be understood in an entirely different way, but the subject, to Hekman a far more radical move. We can no longer think in terms of dualities, of the male subject as opposed to the female object, of either the self-constituting Cartesian subject as opposed to the fully constituted subject, nor even of sex as opposed to gender. Instead of sexual difference, and the male/female opposition which underlies that, we need to think in terms of *differance*, of ourselves as sexed and gendered beings who exist within discourse. *Differance* and discourse do not deny the body; they do create a space for rethinking who we are, and what we think we can know.

Thus to Hekman feminism forces postmodernism to confront its radicalism directly, to remind postmodernism that its attack on Enlightenment epistemology is an attack on the male privilege inherent in Enlightenment dualities; postmodernism in turn reminds feminism that women are made, not born. Our strategy lies not in redefining the subject to include women, to Lyotard "the last ruse", nor in revalorization of the irrational or the intuitive or the emotional over the rational, but in displacement, in constructing allegiances, not in establishing essentialist positions. Resistance, and the power to resist, resides neither in addition nor valorization, but in the dismantling of the whole conceptual framework that consigned, and consigns us still, to that which cannot know, always object, never subject.

FINAL COUNTERPOINT

Spivak and Hekman, Probyn and Weedon muster very powerful arguments for the advantages of postmodernism to feminism. Freed from the confining dualities, the "violent hierarchies", of Enlightenment thought, we would be free to listen to the silence, both to our own undiscovered silence and to the silence of those who cannot speak while we speak, to attend scrupulously to that silence while we construct our own narrative for change. Freed from the opposition of relative to absolute, we could leave room for incompleteness, for uncertainty, in the construction of our own narrative; we could eschew the totalitarianism of the fully coherent, the fully self-evident. Freed from either the fully constituting or the fully constituted self, we could eschew the subject who knows the known in no other way for the subject who is not one, for the known to be known in more than one way.

We would not merely rescript the movie with a heroine rather than a hero. The whole idea of the benevolent intent of the hero or the heroine telling his or her story as the truth is questioned in postmodernism; feminism, following Spivak and Hekman's use of deconstructionism, would not wish either to redefine or to replace one metanarrative with another, the rationalist all-knowing hero who speaks for others with the rationalist—or for that matter the intuitive—all-knowing heroine who speaks for others. Feminism/postmodernism calls into question the idea of metanarrative itself, the idea of the rationalist, essentialist, all-knowing subject, the idea of benevolent intent. Instead of unity, fixity, closure, completeness, the stability of the fixed and oppositional dualities of the Enlightenment, feminism/postmodernism advocates constant interrogation, skepticism, scrupulous attention to our own involvement in the construction of our own narrative, flux and ferment.

Foucault's notion that power and knowledge are embedded in discourse, that in discourse knowledge is created and power displayed, that in discourse who we are and what we can know are created, frees us, just as Derrida's deconstruction of Western metaphysics frees us by displacing the violent hierarchies which structure it. If what we know and who we are is not fixed, unitary, innate, if the real does not exist to be discovered by the essential subject who can only be male, then we can escape the defining category, the words which imprison, the locale which is occluded, whether we understand meaning in Derridean terms as only a temporary retrospective fixing or meaning in Foucauldian terms as an effect of heterogeneous practices of knowledge and power.

But feminists remain skeptical, most particularly about the postmodern privileging of language, and how that might affect how we understand our subjectivity—and within that, how we might forge political allegiances for change. As Hekman has written, we need a strong theory because our project as feminists is explicitly political. Can the intersection of postmodernism and feminism be helpful to that end? More helpful, for example, than the categories of the rational individual and class have been?

Much of the discussion by feminists focuses, not on freeing ourselves from Enlightenment dualities, the project of deconstruction, but on the implications for feminism of a self solely constructed within language, and for some of the same theoretical reasons, on the notion of power and the self constructed solely in discourse. Both Derrida and Foucault privilege language. So in postmodernism have we freed ourselves from some entanglements: from the rational male subject, from the idea that truth can free us from power, only to find ourselves still entangled, but by something else? Where does this privileging of language lead us, in the construction of self, subjectivity and sexuality, and in the notion of language as competing discourses of power and knowledge? Is ridding ourselves of all oppositional dualities enough, situating ourselves only as an effect of discourse enough, understanding power only in discursive terms enough?

As strong an argument as postmodernism makes for its deprivileging of any category, the question that might best be asked is where does postmodernism fit in the crisis of authority of the late 20th century? Does postmodernism commit the sin that it accuses others of: by privileging language, language the stalking horse for reason, are important aspects of women's lives, and important aspects of power, occluded? Can it give strength to the struggles and wishes of the age?

Does Foucault mystify power by confining subjectivity to an effect of discourse and dispensing with the material world? Everything we know is what we can say, but what we say arises out of the material conditions of our lives.

Although Chris Weedon, for example, is careful to stress materiality, Foucault's strategies of discourse lie in an very uneasy relationship with the material conditions of our existence which shape how we understand the world. Foucault constructs the subject—who we are—as solely an effect of discourse, leaving us, for all intents and purposes, inhabiting the same sphere as Hegel and idealism, where the mind is privileged over the body, where sex and gender, and gender relations, can be safely ignored, where the effects of gender on social positioning need not be addressed. The dualism of the Enlightenment which he deliberately disavows, reappears. And by constructing the subject solely as an effect of discourse, he leaves us unable to conceive of how we might resist these strategies of discourse. Are power, knowledge and the subject so intertwined that they are equatable, as Foucault would ultimately have it, or is that position invidious mystification, an epistemology that doesn't so much sublate ontology as erase it? How is the imposition of power as domination to be resisted, by a subject fully constructed from within?

Both Jane Flax and Dorothy Smith draw on the postmodern in ways that I believe resist the inherent totalitarianism in fixity and oppositional dualities without disregarding the feminist problematic, and they do so by grappling with three of the problems that postmodernism has not successfully dealt with in its anti-Enlightenment critique. Postmodernism purports to privilege nothing, but like Susan Bordo's comment that we remain within our perspective, so postmodernism privileges language; it disregards the body and privileges the mind through its emphasis on language with only the merest wave at materiality; and without a space for resistance, it can only conceive of power as domination.

We might call Foucault the twentieth century Hobbes, in the war of all against all where strategies of discourse are the armies of a new civil war.

Jane Flax, a feminist psychoanalyst and political theorist who draws on Freud and Marx in developing her critique of the French postmoderns, is generally supportive of the postmodern position; she sees a number of advantages which a consideration of postmodernism brings to the feminist project. Most particularly, postmodernism means liberation from the confinement of the Enlightenment discourse which "was not meant to include women" as its internal coherence depended "partially on our continuing exclusion" (1990b, p. 230). It is the freedom which comes from the abandonment of epistemology as inevitably rooted in Enlightenment dualities which requires that women be "the other", the moon to a fixed earth, where despite the attractions of Enlightenment thought the bonds of otherness cannot be removed, where immanence, never transcendence is our lot (1990a, p. 42). What we must recognize is that "the order within our lives is an imposed, inessential structure" (Tong, 1989, p. 220).

To Flax it also means the abandonment of the fixed notion of category ["man", "woman", "class", "truth", "reason"], which is both totalizing as well as exclusionary, for the more slippery analysis of the nexus of knowledge, power and history. Feminists cannot have it both ways; we cannot have the recognition of social context as well as a fully coherent—and ultimately closed—epistemology:

> We cannot simultaneously claim (1) that the mind, the self and knowledge are socially constituted and that what we can know depends upon our social practices and contexts and (2) that feminist theory can uncover the truth of the whole once and for all. Such an absolute truth (e.g. the explanation for

> all gender arrangements at all times is X) would require the existence of an Archimedean point outside of the whole and beyond our embeddedness in it from which we could see (and represent) the activities of perception and of reporting our vision in language. The object seen (social whole or gender arrangement) would have to be comprehended by an empty (ahistoric) mind and perfectly transcribed by/into a transparent language. The possibility of each of these conditions existing has been rendered extremely doubtful by the deconstructions of post-modern philosophers. (1990a, p. 48)

However, Flax has two major, and interrelated, concerns regarding postmodernism. In its privileging of language in the construction of the self and of subjectivity it ignores most particularly gender and, in ignoring gender, removes acknowledgement of gender relations structured by domination. At the same time it removes a place from which resistance might begin and in so doing constructs power only as domination, denying the multiple sites and multiple forms of power which postmodernism purports to advance.

To Flax, postmodernism decenters the "Enlightenment conception of a unitary or essentially rational self", restructuring the self solely as an effect of language or of strategies of discourse, without incorporating feminist theorizing about the self, which has pointed out how "gender enters into and partially constitutes both the self and our ideas about it" (1990b, p. 228). Without this incorporation, Western man remains the star of his own show, albeit in an unfamiliar version, and still blinded by the effects of his own position. This self remains the asocial and isolated self we have seen before in its modernist version, blind to its maleness and to male privilege. Flax argues that we must therefore reconceptualize the self within the wider context of social relations which includes gender relations—some of which are structured by domination—if we are not merely to remount the same old production with the same old star.

Furthermore, by disregarding gender and gender relations, postmodernism once again assigns women to the margins by completely disregarding how we are constructed through our relations with others, in our "concrete social relations", and in particular, the first person most of us have an intimate social relationship with—our mother. Flax argues that theories which deny "the centrality of human relatedness or obviate the ways these relations become part of a complex inner world or distinctive subjectivity" may be "the latest in a long line of philosophic strategies motivated by a need to evade, deny or repress the importance of early childhood experiences, especially mother-child relationships, in the constitution of the self and the culture more generally" (Ibid, p. 232).

Flax goes on to argue that the postmodern emphasis on language alone in the construction of the self cannot explain how relations of domination are constructed, which postmodernism purports to do. As she notes, "One can seek meanings without assuming they are rational, context free, or fixed 'forever' or that meaning can be attained only through or depend on the use of reason. Play, aesthetics, empathy with or being used by others' feeling states are also sources of meaning and intelligibility" (Ibid, p. 223). To Flax, this privileging of language "denies the existence of the variety of concrete social practices that enter into and are reflected in the constitution of language itself. . . . This lack of attention to concrete social relations (including the distribution of power) results . . . in the obscuring of relations of domination. Such relations (including gender relations) then tend to acquire an aura of the inevitable and become equated with language or culture (the law of the father) as such" (Ibid, p. 47).

In this erasure of the self where we are constituted solely within language, where are the places for resistance, and what are the political implications? Where would suppressed discourses and local and particular knowledge come from except in "some form of 'the self'"? Flax asks. As she points out, "Something must exist within and among persons that is not merely an effect of the dominating discourse. Otherwise how could conflict and struggle against domination continue even in the most totalistic discursive formation?" And in addition, how could we understand the internal discipline that Foucault advances without "the existence of a human will that is not merely an effect of discourse?" (Ibid, p. 231). By ignoring gender and gender relations, and the social position from which we speak which is at least partially an effect of gender, as well as ignoring any other way through which the self could be [partially] constituted, power is conceived in a way which postmodernism would purport to preclude: it is unified rather than multiple, dominating rather than also resisting and enabling.

Whereas Flax focuses her criticism of postmodernism on the privileging of language in the construction of subjectivity, and the implications arising from that particularly for gender and power, Dorothy Smith (1990) focuses on the mystification of power rather than its explication in Foucault's strategies of discourse. To Smith, in Foucault's formulation "power has no ontology, no form of existence" (p. 70). Rather than the ethereality of Foucault's strategies of discourse that in denying the materiality of life denies both the possibility of resistance and the possibility of change, Smith proposes that instead power be "understood as arising as people's actual activities are coordinated to give the multiplied effects of cooperation. The power of objectified knowledge arises in the distinctive organization it imparts to social relations" (p. 70). She goes on to point out that

> Power and knowledge are not linked in some mystical conjunction such as that enunciated by M. Foucault. What we call 'power' is always a mobilization of people's concerted activities. If facticity, if objective knowledge, is a form of power, it arises in the distinctive concerting of people's activities that breaks knowledge from the active experiencing of subjects and from the dialogic of activity or talk that brings before us a known-in-common object. Objectified knowledge stands as a product of an institutional order mediated by texts; what it knows can be known in no other way. (p. 79-80).

To Smith, by "investigating the actual social organization of knowledge" we can "bring the social relations organizing power into the light" (p. 66). Thus, rather than being unable to grasp how strategies of discourse arise, we can begin to explicate how those relations of ruling are put into play. Power, rather than an expression in language, becomes an expression of the material conditions of life; the ontology of power reappears. Smith goes on to point out that "the contradiction between knowledge as independent of particular knowers and knowledge as arising in the activities of particular subjects is addressed here as an effect of social organization" (Ibid). In the process of stating this is what I know, pulling this knowledge out of our heads and looking at it, in this process of distancing ourselves from our social circumstances, we separate ourselves from how we came to know that knowledge, the knowledge which arises out of our own experiences and shapes us. As Smith stresses: "the externalization of knowledge in which she participates and becomes a knower is the accomplishment of social organization in which she is active" (Ibid). Thus we need to focus on the "relations coordinating people's actual sequences of action"; these relations "must be central to our investigation, for it is these actual activities that bind them into the extending sequences co-ordinating activities among many individuals and across multiple sites" (Ibid, p. 201).

In Smith's work, what Foucault calls strategies of discourse, our way of understanding the world expressed in words and given strength by power, is firmly rooted in materiality; like Smith, I am suspicious of any investigation that ends at the level of language. Words are rooted in what we do because what we do forms our understanding of ourselves. It is not words which imprison us; they have their origins in the actual material conditions of our lives. To Smith it is not where we stand and observe from, [a version of the transcendence of liberal thought] but what we do, our experience of the lived conditions of our lives that shapes our understanding of the world. It is an understanding of the world that cannot be fixed, and therefore cannot be a source of invariate knowledge. To Smith, "the particularities of our experience allows us to explore as insiders the social relations in which we play a part" (p. 61)—particularities which provide us with the radical perspective necessary for change (cf. Rose, 1985).[17] Language is a mediator between—not a reflection of—"our directly experienced world" and the "virtual reality" (p. 62). Instead of focusing on the "situated imperfection of the knower", Smith focuses on the "status of knowledge as socially and materially organized, as produced by individuals in actual settings, and as organized by and organizing definite social relations. The social organization and accomplishment of knowledge itself is the focus of inquiry" (p. 62). Like the pair of pants feminists gave to the category of man after they brought him down to earth, so does Smith situate power and knowledge in the materiality of our lives, where we might contemplate change, not just war.

What Smith and Flax point out are serious lacunae within postmodernism, lacunae which we need to take seriously, as postmodernism would demand that we do, seriously, skeptically, and scrupulously, as we pay attention to our own involvement in the construction of our own narrative, as we do to others' involvement in theirs. But as Vicky Kirby (1991) points out, arguing along much the same lines as Hekman, it's a mistake to set up as an oppositional duality feminism versus postmodernism. As feminists we need a "strategy that relentlessly shuttles between commitment and its critical interrogation" (p. 394). Oppositional dualities imprison us; they limit us needlessly through an imposed order that does little to clarify our thoughts, much to prevent us from thinking in terms of liberatory strategies. Neither feminism nor postmodernism are "unified terms" (p. 395). They are "interrogative spaces, mutable 'identities' that are constantly being renegotiated and transformed, contested and mobilized for different purposes and different effects" (p. 395-6). They intersect; they serve to remind each other what might have been forgotten, what needs to be remembered. Feminism confronts postmodernism with its own radicalism which postmodernism sometimes forgets: in the deconstitution of Western metaphysics, it is not only speech which is deprivileged, but rational man, the subject who can know; in Foucauldian discourse, the king is also a man. Postmodernism serves to remind feminism that the certainties of the Enlightenment were never ours, and cannot be; the redefinition or revalorization of women within these certainties will lead us nowhere. As Spivak has pointed out elsewhere, feminism is a political movement; postmodernism is a political corrective. The two intersect; they sometimes talk; power always intercedes.

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[17] As Phyllis Rose wrote in *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (1985), the "most radical perspective is one's own".

WOMEN, MEN, WORDS AND POWER: A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEWCOMER

Organizational theory which relies on the assumptions of either liberal or Marxist political theory—either the individual or class as categories of analysis—cannot explicate how we as newcomers to the organization come to know relations of domination and subordination in the organization, cannot explicate the accomplishment of women's marginalization in organizations. Socialist feminist theory, with its reliance on Marxist epistemology, and drawing particularly on Lukacs—the standpoint of the capitalist versus the standpoint of the worker taken one step deeper as it were to privilege the standpoint of women, rooted in the sexual division of labour and using a revised version of alienation—is similarly handicapped with its focus on coherent theory, the unitary category and on the accessibility of subjectivity as a source of truth. These concepts have all been criticized by the postmodernists as unanalysed sites of power, where each are postulated as standing outside of relations of power and knowledge. In the formulation of its anti-Enlightenment critique, postmodernism privileges language rather than reason or praxis—our subjectivity, who we are, is constituted in language—furthermore postulating language as the expression of strategies of discourse and therefore as inevitably embroiled in the inextricable intertwining of power and knowledge to which it gives voice. In this formulation, nothing is fixed, everything is constantly in flux—in play, to use Derrida's term—not meaning, because meaning cannot be fixed except as evidence of a site of power; not reality, because reality is not something to be discovered but rather is created and recreated through the conjunction of power and knowledge; not knowledge, because knowledge cannot stand outside of power; not power, because power is not a sovereign entity but rather a strategy; not subjectivity because it is no longer understood as the unified, rational, all-knowing self of the Enlightenment; not experience, because the link between self and experience is mediated by power.

However, postmodernist theory exists in a most uneasy relationship with feminist theory. Feminist theory is concerned explicitly with relations of women and men, what could be termed sex/gender power relations. By definition feminist theory is concerned with women and men and their relations, and if not necessarily woman and man, certainly women and men, all of whom have defined bodies. Bodies cannot be indeterminate and plural, although reality may be. As Susan Bordo wrote, the only bodies we dance in are our own—our perspective limits us, our own particular experiences shape us. As a theory which privileges language, and concentrates on the nexus of power and knowledge in the formulation of strategies of discourse which constructs our organizations as the places that we know, postmodernism has a great deal to offer organizational theory. Organizational theory can no longer blind itself to the inextricable intertwining of power and knowledge, and in so doing continue to privilege those in power. However, as a feminist, and by nature of the theory, concerned with the creation and maintenance of asymmetrical gender power relations, I am less sure that the postmodernist theories of Foucault and Derrida, Lyotard and Althusser, Freud and Lacan, not to mention their antecedents in Nietzsche and

Heidegger, offer me as a woman, and women, emancipation from those relations of domination and subordination. To focus explicitly on two of the many critiques that have been advanced against the postmodernists by feminist theorists, those of Jane Flax and Dorothy Smith, both point to peculiar blindnesses in the theory that give feminists pause. To Flax, the ontology of the subject is not just sublated by the epistemology, but erased, leaving us to wonder how resistance to strategies of discourse is ever formulated if the subject disappears, as it does in Foucault's formulation. In the formulation of the self as constructed in language and positioned by strategies of discourse, where is empathy, art, relations with others, specifically between the mother and the child? And in postmodernism's privileging of language [just another term for reason?], how is the materiality of our existence to be understood? In Dorothy Smith's formulation, it is in our ineluctable materiality that our understandings are formed, our experiences of the world as we know it, constructed. In the ethereality of language without materiality the relativity and ultimate political stasis of Foucault's conjectures is maintained. But by focusing on the materiality of our lives as accomplishing what could be termed Foucault's strategies of discourse, Smith opens the way for change and possible political action—and thus for hope—without turning gender power relations into a marginal sub-text or postulating fixity in any of its forms. Thus postmodernism intersects with feminism, feminism with postmodernism—not as a synthesis, but as skeptical, wary, occasionally illuminating, more often frustrating, talk.

IV. IMPLICATIONS: A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AS IT APPLIES TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEWCOMER

How might we understand how the newcomer comes to know the organization? That question hinges on our assumptions about who the newcomer is, about how we come to know, and about what we consider the organization to be, assumptions which are ultimately about the nature of the self, about reality or truth, about language, and about power. How does organizational theory deal with both the question, and the assumptions on which it is based? In particular, which variant in organizational theory—modernist, postmodernist, feminist/postmodernist—best illuminates the question? What do they have to say about the self, about truth, about power and about language which is liberating, emancipating, not oppressive? Postmodernism, and postmodernist organizational theory, may be a new attempt to deal with power, and with liberation and oppression, but like Marxism, it has perhaps insurmountable difficulties dealing with gender, and gender power relations. And because all newcomers are either men or women—as Spivak has pointed out in another context, there is no "literal referent" for newcomer—postmodernist organizational theory alone cannot deal with gender power relations. Instead I propose an intersection of feminism and postmodernism: a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization of organizational theory is my attempt to illuminate the material covered in the review of the literature which seemed most pertinent to the question "how do we come to know an organization new to us", without constructing new forms of oppression, new ways of silencing.

MODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

In much, if not most, of organizational theory, the organization itself is written about as if it were a thing, a factory or maybe a plant, but nonetheless something that is real, something that is there, something that can be defined, described, revealed, discovered—all words which reflect our Enlightenment heritage. Burrell and Hearn (1990) point out that most organizational theorists write within the tenets of modernism, within the philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment which privilege reason and progress and link the two to human happiness. In both systemic modernism, or "the instrumentalization of reason" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 95), reason understood as that "which can yield the preferred outcome" (p. 96), and critical modernism, or the recapturing of rationality for emancipatory purposes, the goal of the Frankfurt theorists, our organizations are described as extensions of human rationality, as exemplifications of "planned thought and calculative action" (p. 91), as "intrinsically logical and meaningful . . . constituted by Reason" (p. 96), where what we call knowledge is "expressed in terms of the needs of large scale technological systems" (p. 95), where what we we want is what the system needs (p. 97). In this understanding of what organizations are, rational authority is the basis for the model organization, which is also the "basis for the good social order" (p. 104). We are firmly at the centre of this "human projection"; here, in a world which we have created for ourselves, we can "uncritically assume that the world exists only for us" (p. 94), the creation myth replayed through the Enlightenment. And in this world we understand our organizations very narrowly, within a troika of "modernism, productivity and big science" (Burrell and Hearn, 1990, p. 11) which focuses on the "production of goods, services and outcomes" (p. 14), common tenets in both systemic and critical modernism.

If the organization can be described as something which is fixed and unified, something with definite boundaries, something that is "calculative and utilitarian in intent, reassuring in its substance" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 93), then the self in modernist organizational theory is equally unified, equally fixed. This self is fully conscious, stable, and "constituted by a set of static characteristics such as sex, class, race [and] sexual orientation" (Lather, 1991, p. 5). "It is the "centre of rational control" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 91), understanding the world from "the self-elevated position of a narcissistic rationality" (p. 94); it is the ultimate source of all knowledge or meaning. This all-knowing, self-present self embarks on a process of discovery of knowledge or truth, best taken alone, in the liberal or systemic version of organizational theory, or inevitably shaped by its social context, in the critical version, but in both cases knowledge is acquired through the opposition of the subject who knows to the object to be known. In both cases the subject—the individual, or the worker, in the Marxist versions—is essentially male, "rational man" who uses the power of reason to discover a fixed reality and to impose his solution on the world (cf. Hekman, 1991). What the organization is, then, is something which is an extension of rationality, a "bounded social system system with specific structure and goals which acts more or less rationally and more or less coherently" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 102), which the rational male individual, or a rational male worker, can know, both of whom have a unified, all-knowing self, in the sense that they can know themselves, and in knowing themselves, know—and control—the world.

In modernist organizational theory, language refers to something other than itself; it reveals meaning, it does not create it. It is referential; it legitimates itself by referring to some grand narrative, some great story which we tell ourselves, forgetting that it is just a story which we have made up to explain ourselves to ourselves. In the sense that "it already knows, modernism is totalizing and controlling" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 94). Language is conceptually the same as the organization and the self in modernism. It is transparent; like a limpid pool it reveals a reality that can be known. The essential meaning of reality belongs to the subject; the subject is the source of meaning, the author of meaning. The individual in this conceptualization of language assumes centre stage—evocative words in organizational theory, and particularly in their discussions of how people might come to know the organization.

In both systemic and critical modernism the rational, unified self, a fixed and unified reality, unified theory, transparent language and power as fixed, unified and sovereign mirror each other in their assumptions. As Nancy Hartsock (1984) reminds us, "different theories of power rest on differing assumptions about both the content of existence and the ways we come to know it" (p. 3). Although Hartsock argues that power in systemic modernism is really domination, and that power in critical modernism is capacity, in both cases power is understood ultimately as sovereign, as a fixed entity—a city on the hill to be stormed.

As she explains, power in systemic modernism rests on the epistemology of the capitalist. To Hartsock "market exchange theory"—her term for Cooper and Burrell's systemic modernism—is based on the assumption of autonomous and isolated individuals making a free exchange in a free market, where the market is uncoercive and the exchange therefore voluntary, or the exchange is economically necessary and therefore justifiable. She argues that social theorists like Homans, Blau, Dahl, Polsby, Parsons, Lasswell and Kaplan all "share the fundamental assumptions of exchange theory: individuals are assumed to be isolated and interest-driven, and to interact only on terms of their own choosing" (p. 10). But to Hartsock it is only by descending to the epistemological level of production from the epistemological level of exchange that we can "understand such issues as the relation between structural determination and individual action, between the choices individuals may make as opposed to the choices available to social groups and classes, [and] between real and subjectively held interests" (p. 92). What the use of Marxist theory allows us to understand is not only the dialectical rather than the dual nature of power and fate, intentional action and structural determinism, and the individual and the group, but also how our sense of community and our view of power is structured by an emphasis on exchange rather than on production. In market exchange theory the view of power on which it rests can only be construed as domination. In Marxist theory, which emphasizes production rather than exchange, and which has a very different understanding of community, the view of power on which it rests is capacity, or "competence and effective action in dealing with both the natural and social worlds" (Hartsock, 1984, p. 137). Nevertheless, in neither systemic or critical modernism can power be construed as anything other than separate and sovereign. Like language, the self, and reality, power is fixed and unified, sovereign over all.

POSTMODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Instead of the fixity, rationality and purposefulness which characterize how organizations are thought about in modernism, in postmodernism organizations are conceived of in terms of flux and indeterminacy, as places where neither reason, the unified self nor power as sovereign are given positions of privilege, those taken for granted assumptions about the world which inform us as we write. Instead, in postmodernism organizations are conceived of as "episodic and unpredictable manifestations of a play of domination", where power "masquerades as the supposedly rational construction of modern institutions", where the "systems of rationality" by which we understand our organizations are discourses of knowledge and power which both position us and create us, within the organization and without (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 109). In this postmodernist understanding of the organization, or organizing, power and language are central, not the self—it is the disciplinary discourses of organizing which are the focus. As Michel Foucault points out, "'our own contemporary society is not maintained by a visible state apparatus of national guards and state police, less still by shared value systems, but by the hidden techniques of discourse always at work in 'carceral' institutions'" (Burrell, 1988, p. 225). It is a world which we cannot escape: we are all "incarcerated within an organizational world"; we exist "within an institutional framework of incarceration", Foucault's notion which resonates with Weber's iron cage (Ibid, p. 232). Power is no longer separated from knowledge, knowledge from power, the self from either; they are inextricably intertwined, each with the other. The self is no longer separate, autonomous, the source of meaning; instead the self is created within language, an effect of strategies of discourse. We are both created within and enmeshed by what we call our organizations: our organizations are places where power is all-pervasive, where there is no escape, where we are disciplined rather than punished.

Modernist organizational theory depends on the Enlightenment dualities within which it itself is constructed for its internal coherence; the organizational world is understood in terms of hierarchical opposites, where one is privileged over the other. Hence in modernist organizational theory, for example, the irrational and the informal are demonized, rationality and formality suppressing their own opposites "in such a covert way that we remain unaware of [their] censoring function" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 109). But in postmodernism the irrational and the informal are understood as always already having contaminated the rational and formal, as have any of the other Enlightenment dualities which confine as they order, forcing us to see the world in digital flashes rather than in the spectrum of the analogue. The postmodernists argue that the rational, for example, is constituted by the irrational, that the terms are self-referential, that they cannot be separated. Without a singular meaning, without a referential or transcendental point, the rational can no longer be deemed "a privileged and unassailable site in social discourse" (p. 109). Instead of meaning and understanding as "naturally intrinsic to the world", the modernist view, the postmodernists argue that meaning and understanding are constructed. Derrida's project of deconstruction is to reverse the process of construction, to show "precisely how artificial are the ordinary taken for granted structures of our social world . . . to show that rationality and rationalization are really processes that seek to hide the contradictions at the heart of human existence". Our organizations are not neutral sites of rationality and efficiency; instead they are "the result of a complex process of a will to know which orders and organizes the world because it cannot tolerate not knowing; contradiction and ambivalence are forms of abnormality which have to be exorcised" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 100). What had been referential, fixed, hierarchical in modernist organizational theory, in postmodernism is brought down to earth and re-examined in terms of the Other, the containment of the Other understood not as an ordering principle, but as a site of power.

In modernist organizational theory power is understood as a "kind of property that is owned and operated by such social units" as organizations or individuals; it is "an autonomous system of compulsion". But in postmodernism, formal organizations are "the ever present expression of an autonomous power that masquerades as the supposedly rational construction of modern institutions" (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 110). Power does not reside in structures or in particular people, but in the interconnection of networks of relationships (Burrell, 1988, p. 227). It is all pervasive, "transmitted by and reproduced through all human beings in their day to day existence. It is discrete, regular, generalized and uninterrupted. It does not come from outside the organization but is built into the very processes of organizing" (Ibid, p. 227). Our organizations are not extensions of human rationality; they are "transitory manifestations of relationships of dominance-subordination" (Ibid, p. 231).

Thus, instead of the rationality and purposefulness that characterizes modernist organizational theory, in postmodernism organizations are "without meaning and purpose" other than what we give them (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 94). Cooper and Burrell point out that we must recognize that our "world of commonsense structure is the active product of a process that continually privileges unity, identity and immediacy over the differential properties of absence and separation" (Ibid, p. 100). In modernism we decide what it is that we want, we create it, and we maintain that it is transcendent, beyond questioning, that it is rational, that it embodies "commonsense". In postmodernism we recognize that our organizations are "self-referential, processual (i. e., without fixed location)", and automatic, meaning that we cannot control them, that they are not something subject to us (Ibid). Instead of focusing, as in modernist theory, on the production of goods and services within an organization, and therefore how it might be more efficient, more rational, in postmodernism we focus on the processes of organizing, writing within the assumptions which that entails: that all knowledge is relationally produced rather than revealed; that reason and progress are no longer inextricable from human happiness; that rather than the confining hierarchies of the Enlightenment we have the free play of meanings, that all terms contain their own opposites and hence cannot be singularly grasped; that meaning originates in language, not in ourselves; that language does not reveal the reality of the world, it creates reality, the only reality we can know.

FEMINISM/POSTMODERNISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

If we ask ourselves how actual women and men—not just the undifferentiated newcomer—come to know the organization, or in postmodernist terms the discourses of power and knowledge which we call our organizations, how would we answer? How might we understand the self, the organization, language, power and knowledge as they are constructed within a feminist/postmodernist understanding, and how might that illuminate how women and men come to know the organization, in a way that neither marginalizes women nor fixes woman as referential? How might we not just add on women, leaving the previously taken theoretical approaches intact, but theorize about sex, gender and gender relations[*] within a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization of organizational theory?

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[*] I will follow Hekman's (1990) analysis of sex, gender and gender relations. When I use the term gender I do not mean socially constituted gender as opposed to biological sex. To repeat Hekman's statement from the conceptual framework, I will use gender in this sense: that biological sex is something understood "through social categories . . . Biological sex and socially constructed gender are not separate or opposed, but rather form an integral part of what we are as individuals. . . . We are of course, sexed beings, but that biological fact is always

For gender—specifically female gender—is simply added on if it is even considered at all; it is not theorized in most organizational theory, modernist or postmodernist. When I read organizational theory as a woman, I am reading theory written by men about male experiences in organizations designed by men for men—and then universalized, so gender disappears (cf. Sheppard, 1990). A supposedly neutral theory written in the abstract by abstract individuals—who are in actuality men—remains. As Derrida would point out, in the act of writing, all traces of a gendered being choosing one path—and not another—have been erased. We cannot any more contemplate who is actually taking the path than we can contemplate any of the other paths which might have been taken. The accomplishment of power is the effacement of gender, the effacement of the structuring principle of the Other which is always repressed, but which always returns (cf. Gerber, 1992).

The lack of attention to gender in organizational theory is a common complaint. Both Calas and Smircich (1990) and Burrell and Hearn (1990) maintain that gender is either ignored, or it appears that only women have a gender, not men—men are "persons", women are women, men are the norm, women the deviation (cf. Sheppard, 1990). To Calas and Smircich this is accomplished by collapsing sex and gender "into the category of sex: a biologically determined variable easily measured. And further, sex is reduced to the category 'women'. This approach to sex/gender helps maintain organizational theorizing's traditional premises" (p. 5), in spite of the asymmetrical relations of power

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understood socially and culturally. It can be understood no other way" (1990, p. 142).

between women and men which exist "as dominant structural principles" (Ibid). To Burrell and Hearn (1990), although the theory is written as if it were only men who worked in these organizations, it is implicit rather than explicit—it becomes about people in general. They point out that "Weber's theory of bureaucracy is implicitly about male bureaucrats", and that little has changed in organizational theory over the course of the century, although large numbers of women began to work for pay for a much larger part of their lives. Later organizational theorists continued to write of "the generic 'organizational man' (Whyte, 1956), 'corporate man' (Jay, 1972), and 'bureaucratic man' (Kohn, 1971)" (Burrell and Hearn, p. 9), the maleness of organizational theory so deeply embedded that it was not—and is not—experienced as problematic (cf. Sheppard, 1990). Burrell and Hearn conclude that "in surveying the treatment of gender within organizational theory (Hearn & Parkin, 1983, 1987, 1988) it is hard to avoid the conclusion that gender has been either ignored, treated implicitly as male, considered an organizational 'variable', reduced to relative stereotypes, or been analysed in a blatantly sexist way" (p. 10), omissions, lacks and inadequacies that preclude the discussion of asymmetrical gender power relations as well.

But if we are to theorize gender and asymmetrical gender power relations in feminist/postmodernist organizational theory, how might we better understand the effect of gender on the self? How might we start talking about women and men, and the asymmetrical power relations of women and men, rather than assuming that we can just talk about 'people', like 'the individual', or 'the worker', words without literal referents, words which are polite evasions, silences for that which would rather not be spoken aloud[18]? How might we start talking about the self as other than something which is totally the effect of language or discourse, the postmodernist position, but a position which denies the effect of gender and asymmetrical gender relations on the self[19].? I believe that to talk about the self as solely an effect of language or discourse is to take a position which violates postmodernism itself, because it works to reconstruct a hidden opposition with its emphasis on language or discourse as the sole determinant of the self. Like the theories of feminism and postmodernism, neither of which is fixed or unified, to oppose them is to make them what they are not (cf. Kirby, 1991), and so it is with the feminist/postmodernist understanding of the self. The self is neither single, unified or static *as opposed to* the self constructed solely as an effect of language or discourse. That is to resurrect oppositional dualities. Instead, the self transcends "both biological essentialism and linguistic determinism", moving "between several positions 'in which the necessity of adopting a position in a given situation . . . [includes] simultaneously calling it into question'" (Lather, 1991, p. 29). As Lather (1991) points out, "the goal is difference without opposition"; not "the self as unchanging authentic essence" but "the self as a conjunction of diverse social practices produced and positioned socially, without an underlying essence (p. 82).

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[18] In a brilliant meditation on the construction of race as a sign in American literature, Toni Morrison (1992) ponders how what we don't talk about determines what we do: "Silence and evasion have historically ruled racial discourse. Evasion has fostered another, substitute language in which the issues are encoded, foreclosing open debate. The situation is aggravated by the tremor that breaks into the discourse on race. It is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference" (p. 9). But these silences and evasions are not polite liberal nostrums; they "risk lobotomizing that literature, and diminish both the literature and the critic (p. 12).

[19] As Patti Lather (1991) notes, "'Surely it is no coincidence that the Western white male elite proclaimed the death of the subject at precisely the moment at which it might have had to share that status with the women and peoples of other races and classes who were beginning to challenge its supremacy'" (p. 29). But feminism refuses to go along with these death of the subject because of the dilemma facing feminism: How might we account "for the specificity of gender without reifying one particular definition of femaleness, without falling into an essentialist discourse on gender" (p. 28)?

I maintain that to recognize gender and its effects on the self is not to take a totalitarian or essentialist position, that it provides a necessary other lens through which the machinations of power might be viewed, a view not necessarily favoured by the postmodernists. Immanence, not transcendence, is our lot, but immanence not fixed, not unified, the sexed and gendered self existing in a body that cannot be denied. But neither do I wish to resurrect oppositional dualities. Like Hekman (1990), I agree that neither our sex nor our gender can exist in opposition, that to see the two opposed, one as biological, the other as socially constituted, is to remain embedded within Enlightenment dualities. To understand sex and gender as not opposed but as relational, to reject the dualities which structure—and inhibit our thoughts—is neither to deny our bodies which we inhabit as women and men, nor is it to make our bodies the determining factor in how we understand our worlds, nor is it then to agree that we must be wholely constructed in discourse. It is to understand positions as interactive, to recognize the necessity of shuttling between positions which are not fixed and cannot be fixed. I do not agree that all women and all men at all times experience their bodies and what they mean in the same ways, that there is something innate about our experiences living in our bodies that has some larger determining effect that transcends historical time and place. I do agree that being born into a female body rather than a male body has vastly differing consequences in terms of who will have power and who won't, who has power and who hasn't, however power might be measured, whatever standard might be applied. To argue innate versus socially constructed, essential woman versus essential man is to miss the point, as well as to remain caught within the violent hierarchies of Enlightenment thought, to use Derrida's term. It is not biological essentialism versus the self wholely constructed in discourse which is at stake, but power, power which we can use to analyse the discourse of essentialism as a form of silencing women through arguing that to maintain a gendered self is to argue at the same time for the innate and unchanging.

Thus I maintain that we are only partially—not wholely, the postmodernist position—constructed as an effect of discourses of power and knowledge. We are also partially constructed in our relations with others, Jane Flax's point, a partial construction which also allows for the construction of a site of resistance. To state otherwise would be to privilege language, to turn language into the stalking horse for reason, to set up oppositional dualities which work to maintain male privilege. Instead of language—criticized as ultimately deterministic, referential, transcendent (Cf. Flax, 1990, Cameron, 1985)—which informs Foucault's notion of strategies of discourse, I propose that discourses of power and knowledge arise in the materiality—the sensuality—of our lives. I do not understand materiality in vulgar economic terms, in who controls relations of production or even reproduction, but in the very much broader sense of believing that we come to know the world in terms of what we do—perhaps more precisely, in the way that we live, which is not the same as arguing that this is fixed and therefore an unanalysable site of power. Foucault's understanding of the intertwining of power and knowledge as strategies of discourse, and his understanding of the effects of the disciplinary discourse of carceral or normalizing institutions on who we are is enormously helpful as we try to understand how power operates through the process of organizing, but as Dorothy Smith has pointed out, power has no ontology, no state of being. And if we're going to understand how women and men come to know the organization, we have to have a broader understanding of gender power relations than one which postulates that we are solely an effect of disciplinary discourse. As any woman can tell you, power isn't maintained only through the force of words.

Nevertheless, the flux, the indeterminacy, of postmodernism, the skepticism which we know we must apply to the construction of a grand narrative to ensure a place for doubt, and with doubt, a place for enablement, Spivak's words, this skepticism we must bring to any theory, however benevolent, stands us in good stead. By its very nature the totalitarian position is used by the powerful against the powerless; the temptations of the Enlightenment which reside in a perfectly coherent whole resting on perfectly constructed dualities have never been, and cannot be, ours. Our way lies in flux and indeterminacy, the recognition that knowledge or truth or reality—or what we call the organization—cannot stand outside relations of power. Where I differ from the postmodernists is that I maintain that the gendered self is not wholely constructed by relations of power and knowledge, that we are not solely an effect of disciplinary discourse. We cannot stand outside relations of knowledge and power, but neither can we dissolve the gendered self as nothing other than an effect of language, of discourses of knowledge and power. That is an ambivalent statement, one that attempts to reconcile perhaps the irreconcilable points of Flax, Foucault, Derrida and Smith, among others, but like Spivak I say that strategically, politically, it is one that I must make, one that I believe is consistent both with the postmodernist and feminist displacement of hierarchical oppositions. It is within this feminist/postmodernist understanding of the self, reality, power, and language, then, that I will assess the material in the review of the literature as it applies to how we come to know organizations new to us.

THE SELF, LANGUAGE AND POWER IN MODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM

Terms like culture and shared meaning have become more and more important in our understanding of what organizations are as many of us have attempted to move away from a positivist or natural science explanation of how we live in the world to a view that, by the early 80's, was one much more influenced by anthropological and linguistic theory. Deborah Cameron (1985) cautions, however, that neither anthropological nor linguistic theory was free from behaviourism and determinism. To her this means an adherence to a transcendental set of rules, which by virtue of being inherent in the human condition, could remain unquestioned—and unquestioned, could serve to maintain the status quo.

It resulted, at least in organizational theory, for all its talk about process, about symbolism and about organizing rather than "the organization", in a static, rather than dynamic concept of the organization, organizational reality, and the self. The emphasis, at least to the early to mid-eighties, remained focused on culture as a variable easily manipulated by an all-knowing self, an all-knowing self who could also easily grasp or learn this unified and shared concept of what this organizational culture might be. Conversely, it could be taught, passed down, communicated, using transparent language as a medium of exchange. We could learn or enact a role; we could be socialized into the proper role; we could strut our stuff on the organizational stage. Garfinkel's (1967) theory of skillful accomplishment, Weick's (1979) theory of enactment, Mangham's (1983) dramaturgy—all of which emphasized a fixed reality which could be grasped by an all-knowing self—remained intensely influential as theorists struggled to understand how we came to be in our organizations.

Role or socialization theory is thus one major way to attempt to understand how the newcomer comes to know the organization, a theory which rests on modernist assumptions of the fixed and unified self, and a reality that can be known and transmitted through transparent language. But a feminist/postmodernist reconceptualization would maintain that there is no fixed and all-knowing self which can remain apart from the action on the stage, inviolate and removed, whose only involvement in the acquisition of a role is the putting on of the proper clothes or attributes or conversely, the refusal to do so. What is advanced in role theory is freedom of choice, where we choose or not choose, as the case may be, an assumption that also rests on the notion that power is irrelevant. The same assumptions of a fixed self underscore the notion of socialization; but paradoxically, although freedom of choice is advanced, the self exists as something that is done to, not something that does. The behaviourism and determinism of role and socialization theory remain covert; nevertheless, they function as explanatory categories in organizational theory written within systemic modernism to deny the possibility of analysis of asymmetrical power relations between women and men. In these analyses women freely choose behaviour which marginalizes them in organizations; their lack of success, the definition of which is left implicit, is labelled inadequate psychological motivation or an inability which stems from [often covert] notions of characteristics innate to women. That success is in the eyes of the powerful, that no matter what women do, it may never be the "right thing", or as Deborah Cameron (1985) wryly puts it, "a woman's place is in the wrong", are questions that cannot be raised within these assumptions about the self and the organization. In this conceptualization, power and gender are both rendered irrelevant, power because it simply functions as another medium of exchange—information can be exchanged in this conceptualization, but like a dollar bill, it retains its unity, its substance as it is exchanged between one person and another—gender because the gendered nature of the [male] self is effaced in this conceptualization, reappearing as the abstract individual.

The theoretical assumptions of role acquisition and socialization are used by a number of organizational theorists in their attempts to explain how newcomers come to know (cf. Meryl Louis [1980] and her notion of the 'cognitive map' as a way of understanding how newcomers to an organization make sense of it, also Van Maanen & Schein [1979], Schein [1984], Wanous et al [1984], Weick [1979] on learning in organizations). In her critique of organizational theory (1989), Jill Blackmore points out the political implications for women of theories of socialization, or of role acquisition. She stresses that socialization theory, by arguing that who we are is the result of socializing agencies such as schools, the family, work and the media, is implicitly behaviourist. We are passive, acted upon; we do not act. But paradoxically, we are blamed when this socialization process doesn't work, when we're either too aggressive, or not aggressive enough, the norm being men. In this sense socialization and role theory are forms of norm and deviation studies (cf. Cameron, 1985), depending as they do on what men do and therefore what women ought to do, but all of that is structured into the assumptions which underpin this theory. Nor does it question the status quo, a point that Fiona McNally (1979) underlines. She argues that much of the work done on socialization and the subjective experiences of workers mistakes cause and effect. McNally points out that in studies of socialization, women's place in the work force is explained as the "inevitable outcome of an attenuated ambition, imposed by socialization and later reinforced by domesticity. This assumption seemed highly questionable since one was informed elsewhere that depressed levels of pay and prestige among male workers should be examined in relation to prevailing structures of power" (p. 180). The material on socialization and the acquisition of roles in the literature pays little attention to the larger context, preferring to concentrate on the individual, uncoerced by differences in power, undismayed by differences in opportunity, concerned only with learning a part assigned by someone else. The tautology which informs roles and rules rests on the assumption that we can choose certain ways (already given) and from those, present ourselves, like being in a closet and choosing the proper clothes. We obey a hidden set of rules, learn the lines of a role—but in both cases, who made up the rules, who wrote the role? That remains the unasked question, and in that unasked question power resides and gender is effaced.

Organizational theory in the early to mid-eighties was influenced not only by anthropology in its emphasis on culture, but also by linguistic theory. Initially, it was a linguistic theory which was positivist and empiricist

(Cameron, 1985), much like the anthropology which the organizational theorists drew upon as we tried to explain our organizations to ourselves. Both Garfinkel's theory of skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment bear a great deal of resemblance to the theory of their contemporary, the linguist Noam Chomsky. Considering how parallel the development has been in the United States between linguistic theory and anthropology, and how much anthropologists have drawn on linguistic theory in their study of other cultures in the United States, it is not surprising that similar assumptions about the world are embedded in both Garfinkel's and Weick's work, both of whom, in turn, draw on anthropology in their study of organizations. Much of what one linguist says about linguistic theory could be paraphrased to apply to Garfinkel and Weick's version of organizations: "The data of [organizations] are very complicated, heterogeneous to the point of chaos, so [organizational theorists] propose that they must rest on something much more elegant and unified, a set of rules or relations which cannot be observed directly, but which may be inferred by the skillful scientist (Cameron, 1985, p. 13). Just as Chomsky defines competence as a "set of rules known by native speakers of a language, and performance the actual and imperfect language these speakers produce on the basis of the rules" (Ibid), so might Garfinkel and Weick define the world in which their actors follow the rules or enact their setting (cf. Morgan, 1986, pp. 128-130). Noam Chomsky's competent speaker, and his notion of competence, seems to rest on the same theoretical assumptions as Garfinkel's skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment. The question that isn't asked is not how do we know which rules to apply, but where did those rules come from?[20]

Deborah Cameron (1985) explores these linguistic assumptions about the rules of language—ultimately referential—which reside in Saussure's langue/parole duality and in Chomsky's notion of competence/performance from a feminist perspective. To Cameron, it is not that women use language (which in this assumption is neutral, a thing) incorrectly, that they don't know the rules, and if they just learned the rules, everything would be better. Neither does she argue that men have sole control over language and the rules (ahistorical patriarchy) or that somehow there is a male language. Instead Cameron maintains that power differences between men and women are expressed not only in what we say and in the words we use, but in how we think about those differences. She states that "So long as women are subordinate to men, their language *has got* [her italics] to be characterized as indicating natural subservience, unintelligence and immaturity. While men dominate women in mixed groups by limiting their opportunity to talk, our folklinguistic beliefs must include the untruth that women talk incessantly" (p. 33). She goes on to point out that "Non-standard speech [slang, swearing] connotes masculinity";

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[20] Gareth Morgan (1986), describing Garfinkel's theory of skillful accomplishment and Weick's theory of enactment, refers to their use of a transcendental set of rules in both cases which, like Chomsky and Saussure, are ultimately abstract and referential. So, for example, he describes Garfinkel's (1967) theory in these terms: "the most routine and taken for granted aspects of social reality are in fact skillful accomplishment. . . . We can say that the nature of culture is found in its social norms and customs, and that if one adheres to these rules of behaviour one will be successful in constructing an appropriate social reality (p. 128-129). To Weick, "we implicitly make many decisions and assumptions about a situation before any norm or rule is applied" (Ibid, p. 130).

"femininity [is] constructed in deliberate opposition", which would explain the strong pressure on women to "talk like ladies"—in other words, differently than men (p. 48). The way that we as women speak and how we are perceived has much less to do with our so-called incorrect or inappropriate use of language than it has to do with the notion that whatever language we use will be termed incorrect and inappropriate. As a friend of mine ruefully stated, "They keep changing the rules on me, so it never seems to matter what I do, I always do the wrong thing"[21], a point that can be extended from language to roles. In this view, all you have to do is change the way you talk, change the way you act, that the problem lies in the wrong talk, the wrong action, the wrong role. You just learn to talk correctly, act the right way, choose the right role (or role model) and you too will get ahead. Modernist assumptions about the self, about language, and about power, are deeply embedded in both role and socialization theory as well as the linguistic theory it both draws on and resembles.

THE LABOUR PROCESS THEORISTS

However, this emphasis on culture and symbolism, and the role and socialization theory that fits within it, much of it drawn from anthropological and linguistic theory, has been challenged from another perspective that equally emphasizes symbolism, language, and the creation of consciousness, but from a perspective that is forthrightly political. Whereas the implicit behaviourism and determinism of socialization and role theory denies power, turning it into a neutral medium of exchange, the labour process theorists focus on power, and how our place in the material world shapes who we are. Labour process theory is modernist in its presumptions, like the material on culture and symbolism, but it is Marxist rather than bourgeois, and ultimately no more able to grasp gender as a problematic than are static notions about organizational culture, and socialization and role theory.

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[21] Cameron's argument is directly counter to others like Lakoff (1975, 1990) or Tannen (1990) who state that our problem lies in what we say and therefore by changing what we say and how we say it, we can get ahead. This is yet another version of norm and deviation research, dependent on an implicit male norm.

How might the newcomer come to know? As Marxists or neo-Marxists, labour process theorists emphasize the sensuous nature of what we do in creating how we come to know the world, but their analytical category is class and they understand power ultimately in terms of who controls production, although they draw on Marcuse and Habermas in their emphasis on technological rationality and the recapturing of rationality for emancipatory purposes. In this understanding reality is fixed, power is sovereign, and the self is created within systems of production that privilege men and manufacturing. In labour process theory, although the Marxist notion of the sensual nature of the material world is helpful to women, ultimately gender power relations are irrelevant. Class is primary, and 'the worker' erases 'the woman'.

One of the tenets in labour process theory is that we are alienated from a fixed reality—one which we can know—by a particular form of consciousness which is formed by a particular, technocratic, way of doing work. But in this conceptualization, neither privileging a fixed reality, nor privileging a particular form of rationality recaptured from technocracy, is questioned.

Disintegration and alienation and how to combat those twin demons of modernity are of prime concern, not flux. Thus labour process theorists like Alvesson, Burowoy and Thompson draw on the various ways that ideology is understood within what is termed Marxist-humanist or critical modernist thought, but none of them would disagree that there is some version of a better reality that must be understood if we are to be freed from the conditions of our alienation. They focus ultimately on that "better" reality, and on the conditions which would reveal that reality—a classless society.

Alvesson (1987) goes further than either Burawoy (1979) or Thompson (1989), because what is implicit in their work is thoroughly explored in his—the problem of false consciousness in Marxism, but given a new twist in the 1980's. How do we come to think about the world—and in particular, about the organization—in ways that imprison rather than free us? Technological rationality, an idea which draws on notions of Marcuse, and particularly developed by Habermas, alienates us from who we are, and from a rational understanding of a world that might be if we could shuffle off the coils which bind us in the unequal arrangements between capital and labour. To Alvesson it is not just what we produce but how we understand it that is problematic. How do words act to coerce us, how does ideology function? In Alvesson's theory, language is not transparent, a limpid pool, a neutral medium of exchange to which power is not attached; it creates meaning—power and words are not separate. Nevertheless, in Alvesson's conceptualization ideology, or technological rationality, functions on behalf of the elite to repress the "critically rational subject . . . in the interests of a machine-like system of social functionality"

(Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p. 96), functions to obscure the truth, the reality, the real conditions—which can only be reached when we exist in a state of classlessness. A fixed reality, a utopia where men do not oppress other men because class has been eliminated, is what we are left. Like all Marxist and neo-Marxist theory, the focus is on the timid worker—but not on the timid woman who follows the worker home, the wife whose second day is just beginning. But from a feminist/postmodernist position we must ask, whose reality is taking precedence as we come to know? Where are we in this utopia of classlessness?

CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS THEORISTS

Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) all focus on the role of language, of power and words, in accomplishing asymmetrical power relations in organizations. What had been initially a focus on culture in organizations, an idea that rested on the neutral observations of an anthropologist in a strange country, where the focus is on uncovering the rules by which people live, not how things work as they do and who benefits, has slowly shifted. How people learn roles, how they enact their place in the world, the flashy costumes and dramaturgical metaphors that keep our eyes glued on the stage, have been shoved to the side, and the director and the writer beckoned out. The focus is now on who writes the roles, how the roles get written, how words position.

The critical communications theorists focus on language from a slightly different perspective than the labour process theorists, although they too write within the traditions of critical modernism, to use Burrell and Hearn's term.

They focus less on the material conditions which give rise to how we understand the world, and more on language, and the actual formation of meaning. How is language shaped so our understanding of the world continues to benefit those in power? In their view, how would we come to know organizations which are inevitably unequal? How is that knowing shaped by language, or in Mumby's (1988) terms, how is meaning both formed and deformed?

Those who write within systemic modernism in organizational theory are concerned with issues of efficiency, effectiveness, clarity—how might we speak more clearly, write more clearly so the goals of the organization are met. In this conceptualization the self is the neutral abstract self of liberal humanism, language is something that can be grasped and manipulated, meaning is indissolvable from the word itself, reality can be described by a language that is clear and objective. Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) take issue with those ideas, and in particular because these theories about language lack any conceptualization of how power can distort meaning. In that, they remain well within critical modernism—ideology is embraced, but it rests on the idea that there is a non-ideological reality, or in Mumby's terms, an undeformed organizational culture, which can exist. The notion of fixity and of elites who manipulate language for their benefit remains.

Deetz, Kersten and to some extent Mumby draw on Marxist humanism and its critique of capitalism within the tenets of Kant and the Enlightenment, even as they move away from the positivist view that language is referential to a Saussurean or neo-Saussurean view that language creates meaning. Kersten advocates Habermas and his theory of communicative action as a way of recognizing domination in communication, but Habermas has been criticized for his adherence to a transcendental rationality and his maintenance of Enlightenment dualities, both unexplored sites of power (cf. Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 97).

A number of feminist philosophers have pointed out that Habermas' theory of communicative action poses difficulties for women. Benhabib (1987), Young (1987) and Fraser (1987 a,b) all stress that the unacknowledged dualism of Habermas' theory relegates women to an unanalysable sphere where their concerns remain outside public-moral discourse, Benhabib by focusing on Habermas's hierarchical use of the generalized as opposed to the concrete other; Young on the opposition between reason and desire, consensus and love; Fraser on Habermas' assignment of structural properties to one set of institutions (the official economy and the state) and interpretive ones to another set (the family and the public sphere) (1987b, p. 168). Rather than a rigid duality, Fraser maintains that "all of these institutions have both structural and interpretive dimensions and that all should be studied both structurally and hermeneutically" (Ibid). Furthermore, she argues, Habermas conceptualizes those roles which mediate between the system and the life world: worker, citizen, client and consumer, as gendered, the first two as male, the second two as female, although that conceptualization is unacknowledged. To Habermas, in order to be a citizen, one must be able to talk to others as an equal, "under conditions of freedom, equality and fairness" (1987a, p. 38). How then is one to be a citizen and thus to speak freely, if one is a woman? Given these criticisms, how illuminating is *The Theory of Communicative Action* for women in organizations?

Mumby draws on both Habermas and Anthony Giddens in the development of his analysis of organizational narrative as the formation and deformation of culture. To Mumby, what we can know about the organization lies in the construction of organizational narrative, in our conversations which we have with each other. In this way he brings down to the organizational level the concept of ideology—it is those conversations which create and reinforce asymmetrical power relations which are ideological, those conversations which are egalitarian which do not. However, what is ideological and what is not remains outside Mumby's purview; he is concerned with the formation and deformation of organizational culture, not with an exploration of what is ideological other than that which is determined by Marxist categories of ownership. Like Deetz and Kersten, ultimately his notion of power depends on class; gender is rendered marginal in his analysis, although his most telling narrative is recounted by a female secretary in a university department where those in power are men. Neither Habermas, Giddens, Marx or Weber can provide analyses of the organization, of the self, of language or of power which do not marginalize women, or women's concerns. The question "how we come to know an organization new to us" remains fixed at the level of men describing how other, more powerful men use words in a way which prevents the less powerful men from changing the situation, although Mumby in particular adds a much needed dimension to our understanding of what we do in organizations that works to maintain asymmetrical relations of power between men.

CONCLUSION: MODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Organizational theorists like Pettigrew (1985) and Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings (1980), who draw on Weber, but the Weber of the iron cage, not rational bureaucracy; labour process theorists like Alvesson (1987), Burawoy (1979) and Thompson (1989) who draw on Marx and Marcuse, and organizational communications theorists like Deetz (1987), Kersten (1987) and Mumby (1988) who draw on Habermas and Giddens all focus on power, all focus on language and consciousness; all neglect gender. Like those who write within systemic modernism, by the 1980's they too focus on organizations as cultures as they attempt to grapple with an increasing focus on symbolism within the social sciences as a whole. But whereas those writing within systemic modernism emphasize the isolated self, the liberal ideal of the transcendent and therefore objective observer with its behaviourist and positivist implications, those writing within critical modernism focus on the social context in the creation of the self. But in both the self remains an unacknowledged male self, both in their explicit focus and in their implicit theory.

These writers are less constrained by economic determinism than earlier writers on the left, and much more interested in exploring strands in both Weber and in Marx that deal with consciousness, a focus that fits in well with organizational symbolism and the question of how we come to know. Pettigrew and Ranson, Greenwood and Hinings, for example, draw on Weber and his notion of organization as an iron cage, something that exists in the mind rather than coerces the body, stressed by Ranson et al as an "order of domination". Burawoy, Thompson and Alvesson's view of the self, of reality, of language and of power is explicitly Marxist—they draw on a long history of Marxist and neo-Marxist thought in their analyses. Burawoy and Thompson try to draw together what have been sometimes competing strands of thought within Marxism over the century: if Marx has written a humanist critique of capitalism, is it the emphasis on alienation or on production which best characterizes the critique? More simply, can we ever separate the mind from the body? For both Burawoy and Thompson, the organization—in both their cases, factories and male workers—manufactures not just things, but ways of understanding the world: in Burawoy's terms, the manufacture of consent. To him, rules, unquestioned and covertly innate in Garfinkel, Weick, Goffman, Mangham, the same notions reappearing in Chomsky's behaviourist and deterministic theories about competence in linguistics, are made by the powerful to benefit the powerful; to play the game means consenting to a set-up where you can never win, but where, since it's the only game in town, you don't have any other choice.

Their analysis of alienation depends on a fixed reality which we can be alienated from; similarly, the assumption about the self which exists in the Marxist humanism or critical modernism of the labour process theorists or the critical organizational communications theorists depends on fixity—that we can be alienated from our true selves by ideology, in Alvesson's terms, in the form of technological rationality, or in Mumby's, that our participation in the creation and recreation of what we know as the organization will be deformed by ideology which has as its origin the control of production. This idea of an innate, fixed self in Marxist humanism or critical modernism poses the same problems for women as it does in systemic modernism; in both cases the selves are in actuality constituted as male, although the worker and the individual are understood as without gender. Neither control of production nor the extension of Marxist epistemology to the control of reproduction as a way of including women have so far been able to get around the knotty problem of power residing in the asymmetrical relations between women and men.

THE SELF, LANGUAGE AND POWER IN POSTMODERNIST ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Just as the fixed nature of the self is abandoned in postmodern thought, so is the fixed nature of reality—that we can know ourselves, and know our world—the fixed nature of meaning in language, and the fixed nature of power, all of which are explored in Stewart Clegg's (1989) postmodernist reassessment of organizational theory. The question of how we might come to know an organization new to us is given a completely new slant. No longer is there a fixed self, the author of all meaning, the chief player on the stage. Although from the early 1980's onward there had been a shift in the literature to an understanding of organizations not as things but as processes, the idea of a fixed self understanding and putting into play those processes called organizing was maintained. This idea of the all-knowing author of all meaning is dispensed with in Clegg's work; instead, drawing on Foucault, the self, who we are, becomes nothing other than an effect of language, or in Foucault's terminology, an effect of strategies of discourse, where power and knowledge intersect to construct the self. Who we are, and what we can know, are only what we can say about the world. Instead of "I think, therefore I am", in Clegg's formulation we become "I use language, therefore I am". The organization, very far now from anything fixed or reified, becomes not just meaning, as it is in Mumby's formulation, to be formed or deformed, but a position that is an effect of power and knowledge. In Mumby's notion, the organization remains possibly utopian; in Clegg's, that utopian notion is dispensed with to be replaced with strategies of discourse, "regimes of truth", where knowledge and power meet, where both domination and resistance exist. Power is no longer fixed, or sovereign. It exists in representations and networks, Luxemburg, Lukacs and Gramsci linked to Weber and back to Marx, not in his focus on economic determinism, but in his focus on consciousness.

What we can know, then, is what we can say; we can no more separate ourselves as an effect of knowledge and power than we can separate what we know about the world from power. The transcendence of the Enlightenment, the possibility of reason uncontaminated by power, of truth about a world we can know, is interred, literally brought down to earth. Immanence, formerly the lot of women, becomes, theoretically at least, the lot of us all. Instead of the newcomer coming to know the organization as something that can be described in transparent language, a reality which we seek as the truth, or the newcomer coming to know the organization as something that is obscured by an ideology constructed by those in power to keep the powerless in their place, we become the effect of the strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge, which the organization is also. What we can know, and how we can know, cannot be separated; we cannot achieve any distance, any perspective, either from what we call the organization, or from ourselves. We are ineluctably and inextricably involved, and what we can know is only what we can say.

However, can Clegg's reconceptualization of organizational theory within postmodern thought with its emphasis on flux and indeterminacy, its denial of any boundaries, including the boundaries of the body, not just the boundaries of the mind, help us in any way to understand what women say about being a newcomer to an organization? Or are we left precisely where liberal individualism or Marxist humanism leaves us, at the level of the abstract, where gender is simply effaced, rendered irrelevant, and we all move on to other questions which are considered more important, how importance is defined, and by whom, left unquestioned?

As a woman, I reject that I am irrelevant, that what both Engels and Freud called the woman question has no place in organizational theory. We want to figure out how we ended up where we did, how things are structured, how things work. Is the denial of fixity and the privileging of language and of discourse an answer, or more precisely, our answer, even recognizing that postmodernism rejects the idea of one answer as inherently totalitarian? In the view of many feminist theorists writing in the late 1980s—there are, unfortunately, not large numbers of feminist theorists writing in organizational theory, even now—feminist theory and postmodernist theory are useful correctives to each other. The gaps and lacunae which are impossible for each to address, are addressed through an intersection—not a synthesis, not a conversation, certainly not a marriage—of feminism and postmodernism, where each addresses what the other cannot, each reminds the other of the dangers of forgetfulness. Feminism reminds postmodernism of a radicalism it might wish to disavow—in a theory written primarily by men, male power may be an unwanted mirror and the discourse of essentialism a happy screen, but the displacement of hierarchical dualities demands the displacement of male over female; postmodernism reminds feminism of the dangers of the fixed and referential point, of the essentialist argument, no matter how benevolent the intent.

Postmodernist theory, written by men, for men, about men's experiences, at the same time as it purports to write about only power and language, maintaining that gender is only an effect of power and language, renders gender marginal. And in a world where men are more powerful, renders questions about that irrelevant. Feminist theory, with gender, and gender relations its central organizing principle, needs postmodernism in the same way postmodernism needs feminism—to deal with the gaps and the holes, the lacuna that by its very nature the theory cannot address. In feminism, as Spivak stresses, gender may not be fixed, but when we speak of gender, when we speak of women, we are generalizing, we are universalizing, and politically, strategically, we cannot do anything other than that. And yet at the same time we must resist the totalitarianism inherent in universalizing and generalizing, in speaking for the other. Likewise, postmodernism must confront its own gaps in its pursuit of flux and indeterminacy, of strategies of discourse which constantly shift, of the free play of meaning, of *differance*, of the liberation which comes from the rejection of the confining hierarchies of the Enlightenment given force and coherence by the rendering of woman as the Other which takes as its form the unseen rules that we follow both in Chomsky's notions about language and Garfinkel and Weick's notions about roles and enactment.

Confronting one's own involvement in the creation and maintenance of asymmetrical gender power relations when gender is constructed only as an effect of power and knowledge in discourse removes the mirror from men's faces. When everything we can know about the world is what we can say, the physical violence that is a daily aspect of many women's lives, where a man's fist, and not words, is the way power is maintained, cannot be addressed. The sexual subordination contained in Clegg's litany of "worker, wife, woman or whore" (1989, p. 151)—that women are subordinate to men, and are subordinate because they are women, is uncommented upon. But these situations are not mere language games. They are concrete in their subordination. It is not just what it means in the mind, in the ethereality of language, Hegel's idealism rewritten for the 21st century. The bodily concreteness of female subordination needs to be addressed, and it is not addressed, not in Foucault, not in Derrida, not in Lacan, not in Clegg. The denial of fixity in all its forms as inherently totalitarian needs to be addressed as itself a strategy of discourse which denies the power of physical violence which postmodernism forgets in privileging language alone. As Bordo (1990) points out, we can only dance in our own bodies; although reality may be intensely plural, our perspective cannot be, we can only see out of our own eyes, we can only talk out of our own mouths, we have to confront our own bodily selves.

The problem with Clegg's Foucauldian conceptualization of power is that it lacks an ontology. It is both everywhere and nowhere, residing in a Hobbesian world of desperately competing individuals, good not for class nor race nor gender or whatever fault lines fracture the amorphous mass. For Foucault, power is embedded in Heidegger's will to know, the nexus of power/knowledge expressed in language. In Foucault's analysis of organizations, he forgets that the normalizing institutions of psychiatry, psychology, medicine and education are run by men. His theories can't account for group domination of another group, although it is good for the implicit totalitarianism of the closed definition, and how normalizing institutions, by defining what is normal, [that set of rules again] keep us all in line—but those men at the top also keep women in line.

In Foucault language is privileged; it is the determining, the organizing principle. But Dorothy Smith maintains that that is not enough. Where does power come from? If we don't know where it comes from, we can't fight it; if we can't define it, how can we resist it? From what is ultimately a Marxist perspective, Smith maintains that we cannot overlook the sensuous nature of our lives, that in bringing into being the conditions of our existence, which seems to me to include all the things we do from the time we get up until we go to bed—which is not necessarily to argue that any of the positions are fixed—we create ourselves. We create ourselves in the process of being a clerk or a teacher or a lawyer or a mother, or all of those at various times in our lives. These experiences shape us; they don't reveal the truth of ourselves to ourselves, but they do shape us in ways that language does not fully capture, as both Cameron (1985) and Flax (1990) point out, although in slightly different ways.

Cameron maintains that the privileging of language in Foucault retains the determinism of the neo-Saussureans in that language arises seemingly from the sky, another form of deus ex machina to rescue us when we can't figure things out. To Cameron, the rules of language as ultimately referential which reside in Saussure's langue/parole duality, where "langue is the abstract system of relations which make individual behaviour possible" and in Chomsky's notion of competence/performance, where competence is "the set of rules known by native speakers of a language, and performance the actual and imperfect language these speakers produce on the basis of the rules" (Cameron, 1985, p. 13) re-emerge in the arguments of the neo-Saussureans like Lacan, Derrida and Foucault. Although they reject the rigidities of Saussure, they retain language itself as referential by maintaining that who we are is an effect of language, "that language creates all meaning within a society rather than reflecting, or interacting with, anything else" (Ibid, p. 19). And, as Flax pointed out, where is art, empathy, the relationship with others, primarily our mothers, which helped to form who we are before we could even talk? Is this not "I think, therefore I am" rewritten to "I use language, therefore I am"? Whether it is God or reason or language, they are all transcendental reference points which cannot be challenged, the maintenance of a site of power which postmodernism in theory attacks, but which on closer analysis does not. Substitution of one transcendental reference point for another is not what they seek, I think.

CONCLUSION

What I wish to develop here in this construction of how the newcomer comes to know the organization is a theory of oppression and emancipation which draws on both feminism and postmodernism, a theory which forces us to be skeptical and critical about any answer which we may construct, recognizing, as Foucault states, that power lies in the construction of the question itself. Feminism has always used whatever vibrant philosophy is at hand to wage its war against male domination and male privilege; Mary Woolstonecraft used the tenets of the Enlightenment, Nellie McClung, progressivism and the social gospel, I will use the revolution in consciousness which I believe characterizes so much of how we in the twentieth century in the West have tried to understand our world. Thus feminists find the conceptualization of the self particularly problematic in postmodernism. As much as feminists find Derrida's project of the deconstitution of Western metaphysics and Foucault's notion of the intersection of power and knowledge emancipating: that the Otherness in which we reside is the lesser side of a violent hierarchy which must repress in order to structure, and that Otherness is itself a discourse of power and knowledge which seeks to maintain male privilege, feminists remain skeptical of postmodernism's political intent. They find the postmodern privileging of language and the denial of not just a central but a coherent self in favour of a boundary-less self constructed solely as an effect of language to be a move that assigns woman—and women—to the margin. Is the self in postmodernism understood in a way that is perilously close to the isolated, competitive, status seeking individual interested in maximizing [his] advantage in the marketplace, or is the self complex, a relational being, constructed not only in language with its overtones of Enlightenment privileging, but in relations with other people, in ways which language cannot express, but which are not innate, which are not fixed, which do not reside in any referential point but in the constantly changing human condition in a sensuous, material world? As Seyla Benhabib has remonstrated, when there are no criteria, the old criteria remain in place; the abstract individual remains. In the case of postmodernism, men preserve their power because whatever concerns women have as women are rendered irrelevant within the tenets of the theory.

So how might we reconceptualize the self so that we retain our skepticism of all totalitarian positions at the same time as we struggle to make a place for us in theory so our concerns are not rendered irrelevant, so we are not marginalized? By taking this focus, I am drawing on our perhaps peculiar twentieth century need to explain the world by focusing on who we are, and in that, I am drawing on currents of thought which go back to Marx, to Georg Lukacs' reinterpretation of Marx written in the same year as Freud's *Ego and Id*, to Rosa Luxemburg's reinterpretation of Marx to which Lukacs made reference[22], to Weber, to Gramsci, and to Foucault. Lukacs refocused our attention on "the concept of 'alienation' as the philosophical root of Marx's humanist critique of capitalism" (Ibid), on the manipulation of our consciousness, not just on our productive capacities, "the mechanistic materialism by the theorists of the Second Internationale" (Kadarkay, 1991, p. 273)[23]. Why alienation? Are there not links between alienation and the internal disciplining accomplished by the normalizing institutions explored by Foucault, both given expression in language? Although Foucault is more closely linked to Weber and his idea of organizing as the iron cage, it is not so easy to discount the similarities between Weber and Lukacs and Foucault, and how they have thought about how we might understand what we are, and how we came to be. Feminism and postmodernism are further explorations of that, feminism forcing postmodernism to confront its denial of the self, and its denial, therefore, of its own theoretical roots, postmodernism available as a corrective to feminism. As Spivak has pointed out, postmodernism is helpful to women in that it reveals the totalitarianism of any transcendental reference point, and since women are not in power we benefit from abolishing the idea of the sanctity of any reference point. It's a moot point, as several feminist theorists argue, that we need our chance to invoke Enlightenment certainties. We live in the here and now, and our best political strategy is to do away with the idea of the unchallengable, the innate truth, whether ordained by God or man. We're neither one, and cannot be either one, given the theory that supports them.

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[22] Luxemburg focused on the consciousness and attitudes of the people, prompting Lukacs to write that she was "'the only disciple of Marx who effectively continued his life work'" (Ettinger, 1986, p. 167).

[23] To Kadarkay, "It is customary to credit Lukacs with the discovery that the concept of 'alienation' was the philosophical root of Marx's critique of capitalism . . . .But what lends further importance to *History and Class Consciousness* is that therein class consciousness is treated for the first time in Marxist theory, as something subjective and culturally bound rather than determined by objective economic existence" (p. 273-274).

Thus I propose an intersection of feminism and postmodernism, or a feminist/postmodernist focus on discourses of power and knowledge rooted materially, and on the self as partially constructed in language, partially constructed by gender and asymmetrical gender relations, but constructions which are not oppositional positions, to link back to and to clarify the literature's focus in organizational theory on meaning in organizations constructed through language and mediated by power. By focusing on the discursive constitution of relations of gender and power and knowledge, of strategies of power and knowledge and gender which struggle to [partially] constitute subjectivity and meaning, feminist/postmodernist theory helps to illuminate how women and men come to know an organization, without reifying the organization, denying gender power relations, denying the material world, or positing any unified fixed categories or representations—neither subject nor reality nor transcendent justificatory appeals which defy change, plurality and strategies of power and knowledge.

What feminist/postmodernist theory brings to the review of organizational theory and specifically newcomers to organizations is a particular understanding about the relationship between power and knowledge, or power and meaning, as neither fixed nor transcendent. In this understanding meaning is not fixed in language, nor is meaning transparent, merely reflecting an already existing reality or truth. We do not interpret in the sense of translating what is transparent, leaving us uninvolved; we attach meaning to our understanding, and in that act, are involved in the creation and recreation of meaning. But this formation of meaning is contested, and because it is contested it is a site of power. The question then becomes not just how meaning in constructed and maintained, but who imposes their meaning on others? To put this is Foucauldian terms, how do strategies of discourse position us in organizations which are themselves discourses of power and knowledge, "episodic and unpredictable manifestations of a play of domination" and of resistance, to repeat Cooper and Burrell (1988, p. 109), discourses which we ourselves create and participate in, but which we ourselves are not the sole authors? In this understanding, then, organizations are really sites where women and men struggle to impose their meaning on others.

But the organization, like every place, cannot stand outside gender power relations. Relations of power between women and men, and strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge, are all intertwined. There is no neutral stance outside of these relations, no theory which can presume that any of these are irrelevant. It is not, then, just understanding the creation and maintenance of meaning in organizations, what might be otherwise termed the construction of a culture, but asking who is imposing that meaning? Or to put it in other, more familiar theoretical terms, whose social reality prevails, whose metaphor is dominant, how is closure, and thus power, achieved?

V. FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST PRACTICE

In this chapter I wish to develop a feminist/postmodernist methodological approach to the question of how new members come to know and understand—to make sense of—organizations as places where knowledge, power and gender intersect to construct us as members of that organization, where the meaning that we attach to our experiences as newcomers is expressed in discourse, meaning that is therefore a site of political struggle.

In feminist/postmodernist practice knowledge is not discovered through the application of natural law by the detached and unbiased observer; there is no knowledge, no reality that is only hidden, a reality which we may uncover if we only know "the way". In feminist/postmodernist practice neither rationality nor science nor epistemology itself are accorded a position of privilege. Nothing is transcendent, nothing can stand outside relations of power, not the observer, not knowledge, not transcendent justificatory appeals to universality, objectivity, impartiality, not our "grand narratives", the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of a world which we ourselves have created.

Both positivism and interpretivism, quantitative and qualitative analysis are rooted in Enlightenment epistemology: all agree that there is an absolute grounding for knowledge, whether it be objective or subjective*, all posit "the subject as an autonomous individual capable of full consciousness and endowed with a stable 'self' constituted by a set of stable characteristics such as sex, class, race, sexual orientation" (Lather, 1991, p. 5). Interpretivists have attacked the idea of the objectivity of truth or knowledge or reality, but they have not attacked the idea of the subject, the other side of the dualism. Absolutism and essentialism have remained, if no longer in the idea of objectivity, certainly in the idea of subjectivity. Modernism has exhausted itself, unable to think beyond the unifying certainty: to Patti Lather (1991), "not only positivisms, but also existentialisms, phenomenologies, critical theories: all . . . [are] rife with subject-object dualisms, telelogical utopianisms, totalizing abstractions, the lust for certainty, and impositional tendencies tainted with colonialism and foundational vanguard politics" (p. 88).

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* To Lather (1991), following Habermas, knowledge claims are generated and legitimated three ways in Enlightenment epistemology: through prediction (positivism), understanding (interpretive, naturalistic, constructivist, phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiry) and emancipation (critical inquiry and action research) (p. 7).

Furthermore, Susan Hekman (1990) argues that the human sciences maintain that absolutism and essentialism in their construction of the subject as male, the object as female, replicating the male/female duality which informs Enlightenment epistemology. To Hekman, because "the separation between subject and object, knower and known are central requirements of the scientific enterprise", the Enlightenment conception of science "defines it as an inherently masculine enterprise" (p. 120). Hekman argues that women cannot be subjects for two reasons: in Enlightenment epistemology "the active, knowing subject that is essential to science has been defined as exclusively masculine", and secondly, "women cannot effect the distance between the knower and the known that is the hallmark of the scientific method" (p. 120). Thus, she states, "women, who can only be objects, do not fit into the subject centered discourse of the human sciences . . . [which is] why the activity of women has not been conceptualized by the human sciences since their conception" (p. 92). But postmodernists challenge both the "true" knowledge of the natural sciences as well as the separate but equal stance of the humanists, that if objectivity could be absolute grounded truth, so could subjectivity. They challenge not only the privileging of the natural sciences but the privileging of rationalism; more radically, they challenge the privileging of the hierarchical dualities which inform Enlightenment epistemology. In particular, postmodernism challenges the constitution of the subject as male, the object as female which Hekman argues is inherent in the epistemology of Enlightenment thought, and therefore inherent in the methodology of the natural as well as the social or human sciences[24].

Thus, instead of the methodologies of the Enlightenment which confine women to the status of object, I draw on the intersection of feminism and postmodernism and the interruptions and disruptions which their intersection neccessarily involves. Instead of the certainties of unitary truth undergirded by the humanist subject, I will focus on "'regimes of truth' [and] the deconstruction of the binary, linear logics of Western rationality . . . foregrounding ambiguity, openness, and contingency" (Lather, 1991, p. 23) and the unsettling presence of women which traditional organizational theory attempts to evade or repress.

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[24] To Hekman, "the contemporary researcher who studies women's social or political roles is adhering to the subject/object dichotomy that has informed the social sciences since their inception: the social scientist is the knower (subject), the object of his study is the known" (p. 94). These categories "exclude women and thus their experience becomes invisible" (p. 95). She goes on to argue that "because women cannot be subjects they also cannot be actors in the social scene. Women who cannot act cannot create a social life, they cannot constitute knowledge or reality" (p. 95). Like Flax, she maintains that the dichotomies of the Enlightenment are central to "constitution of the social sciences. The desire for an objective knowledge of the social world rooted in the knowing rational subject is the basis of the epistemology of the social sciences" (p. 96).

Thus it is in strategies of discourse, where power, knowledge and gender intersect—I add here to Foucault's conceptualization—embedded materially and constantly shifting in a Derridean state of flux, where we express what we know in the organization. Our talk, our stories, what we say to each other at work, expressed discursively—in language—embedded materially, in what we do, shaped by gender power relations, is what we know about the organization.

It is not, however, questions of knowledge which concern me, knowledge which can be acquired, a fixed amount of information that can or cannot be exchanged between the newcomer and the old hand, so the more the newcomer learns about the organization, the more the newcomer progresses on her or his way to becoming an old hand. Instead, it is questions of meaning which concern me, meaning that cannot be fixed except as an expression of power. It is the meaning that we attach to what we think we know, that nexus of power and knowledge that is put into play through the material and gendered conditions of our lives, that concerns me.

This question of meaning rather than questions of knowledge, of truth or falsity, has methodological implications. If questions of meaning are always political, does that mean that everything is relative, that without the certainties of the absolute it is impossible to construct a 'grand narrative', a story through which we understand the world, a story that promises us hope and justice? To both Hekman (1991) and Lather (1991) all truth/falsity oppositions are displaced by the postmodern critique, oppositions which include the oppositions of relativism/absolutism[25], but that does not mean that all discourses are "'equally arbitrary'". Lather points out that

> positionality weighs heavily on what knowledge comes to count as legitimate in historically specific times and places. The world is spoken from many sites which are differentially positioned regarding access to power and resources. Relativism foregrounds the shifting sands of context, but occludes the play of power in the shaping of changing structures and circumstances. . . . In sum, fears of relativism and its seeming attendant, nihilism or Nietzschean anger, seem to me an implosion of Western white male, class-privileged arrogance—if we cannot know everything, then we can know nothing. (p. 116)

As Gayatri Spivak points out, the anti-Enlightenment critique of the postmodernists does not entail the abandonment of a coherent, causal account of the world with an eye to who holds power, only the abandonment of the totalitarian impulse that lies in the construction of the perfect narrative, where there is no space for doubt. To Spivak, a 'grand narrative' is a companion, not a means to an end, a final solution. By leaving a space for doubt, for those other voices that are inevitably silenced when one person speaks and not another, we resist the totalitarian impulse inherent in perfection, in closure. To Spivak, the totalitarian impulse resides there, not in the construction of a coherent, causal account of the world which we construct to help us make sense of the meaning we attach to our experiences.

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[25] To Lather, relativism presumes "a foundational structure, an Archimedean standpoint outside of flux and human interest. . . . Relativism is an issue if a foundational structure is ignored. . . . If there is a foundation, there is something to be relative to, but if there is not foundation, there is no structure against which other positions can be objectively judged" (p. 114).

In the feminist/postmodernist methodological approach, experience, like knowledge, is not something that can be discovered, not something that a person, by "getting in touch with", provides an invariate source of knowledge. Experience, like reality, is not fixed. Neither is the subject "the coherent, authentic source of the interpretation of the meaning of reality" (Weedon, p. 8). Our knowledge of the world is not our unmediated experience of the world revealed through transparent language. Experience is mediated by gender/power relations; we attach meaning to our experiences, meaning that is expressed discursively and is thus a site of power and knowledge. As Elizabeth Weed (1989) has noted in another context, what arose from the feminist consciousness raising of the late 1960s and early 1970s is that our desires, our thoughts may be constructed elsewhere; they are not ours alone.

If the meaning we attach to our experiences is mediated by power, if our subjectivity—who we are—is constructed by relations of power and knowledge and gender and embedded materially, then my task is not to uncover invariate experience, to prove that this knowledge of this experience and guaranteed as authentic by this subject, and unmediated by power, is knowledge more pure than other knowledge. My task is not to uncover whose knowledge is more pure, whose subjectivity is more authentic, whose experience is more likely to illuminate a reality that can only appear the brighter the light. It is not whose knowledge, whose experience can be relied on to produce the truth of the situation, but how relations of gender, of power, of knowledge construct us as subjects, and in constructing us, construct the organization itself. How are relations of domination and subordination constructed between the men and the women who work in the organization, and how are those relations of gender and power understood by the newcomers? What meaning, expressed as strategies of discourse, do they attach to these relations? Like Foucault, but going beyond Foucault, I argue that there is no knowledge of the organization, no meaning that can be attached to what the organization is, which can stand outside of relations of gender, power and knowledge.

Thus the main question in this feminist/postmodernist methodological approach is how to explicate these relations of domination and subordination, these relations of ruling, to use Dorothy Smith's term, without silencing those people who spoke to me, without silencing their voices. I can no more transcribe their voices without the insertion of myself than they can speak in a transparent language that does nothing other than reveal their perfectly authentic reality. In using language, we each attach our own meaning. That act is political. I cannot, any more than the people who spoke to me, stand outside those relations of gender, of power, and of knowledge which construct us all. All I can offer, like Spivak, is to put all my cards on the table, to say 'there they are', to recognize that cinema verité is still only a pretense, that the only reality is the one we create together.

What I can offer then, is not objectivity, impartiality, universality—transcendent criteria which depend on the idea of a fixed and discoverable reality—but respect. Like any biographer, I present a story full of political nuances, but I have an obligation not to misrepresent their stories through silence. Caught on the fulcrum of always politicized meaning, knowing that between me and them we create politicized meaning, my obligation to them in my explication of their entering into and attaching meaning to the construction of relations of domination and subordination is respect, not exploitation. But like Edward Said (1979) talking about the Orient as nothing other than a resource for the West, how can I hear and speak for, without using them merely as a resource? How can I incorporate that respect into my writing? To Said, the first step is to recognize exteriority and its implications; the second and third are to use strategic formation and strategic location as ways of forcing to the surface exteriority, forcing us to confront our inextricable involvement in the discourses of power and knowledge. As he explains:

> Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation. . . . The dramatic immediacy of representation . . . obscures the fact that the audience is watching a highly artificial enactment of what a non-Oriental has made into a symbol for the whole Orient. My analysis of the Orientalist text therefore places emphasis on the evidence, which is by no means invisible, for such representations as representations, not as natural depictions of the Orient. . . . The things to look at are style, figures

> of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original. (1979, p. 20-21)

To deal with exteriority, where a projected image is rendered an objective fact, a representation of the real, where power resides in this hidden transformation, Said recommends "strategic location, which is a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the . . . material he [sic] writes about, and strategic formation, which is a way of analysing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large" (Ibid, p. 20). This is a double focus. I must ask myself, how have I been positioned in regard to the material I wish to write about? I must recognize that I myself am no more fixed as an entity constructed within the iron triangle of sex, class and race, a source of truth defined by those determinants, than were those I talked to. I must ask how have I, as well as how have those who have spoken to me, been constructed within a nexus of gender and power and knowledge that has, at least partially, both positioned them and me, and both articulated and constrained what they and I have had to say. I cannot emphasize enought that the focus is not on the speaker or the writer as truth teller but on the relations themselves as they are put into play by the speaker or the writer.

In recognizing that there is no dispassionate observer, no uninvolved subject who exists beyond either reason or desire, no transparent language nor transcribable, discoverable reality, I do not wish to suggest that nothing can be written other than a polemic. I wish to point out instead that since nothing is free from relations of power, however expressed, I wish to focus on the construction of these relations of power, to explicate how these relations of power are constructed in the organization, to focus on how things come about in the way that they do. How might I achieve that?

According to Dennis Mumby in his modernist study of how organizations are defined by talk and shaped by power, in order "to generate insight into the way that human agents go about making sense of their world", we need to develop "a picture of the social world 'from the actor's point of view'", using thick description, or the "in situ description of a particular social context" (p. 144). But in her construction of a method to explicate relations of power, Dorothy Smith (1990) goes beyond the phenomenological and its assumptions of the all-knowing fully present subject to focus on "the relations and practices that arise in and only in the actual activities of actual people", on the sensuous materiality in which we live our lives (p. 34). By focusing on what people do, by remembering that thought has "no existence other than it arises in what people do" (p. 38), we maintain our focus on sensuous materiality at the same time as we grapple with differences in power and what it means, both to the theory we are writing within and to our own involvement in it. As Smith stresses, concepts do not arise out of thin air; we are not disembodied thinkers operating solely within the realm of Hegel. Instead, "concepts . . . are available to be thought about because their character and the distinctions they make apparent are already structured in actual social relations" (p. 40). We bring down how we think about what happens, and how we think about what happens to us, from the firmament, and tie it to our lives as we live them, remembering that they are inseparable.

Smith points out that we can do this by maintaining what "people say they think" in "the actual circumstances in which it is said", and in the "actual empirical conditions of their lives". We do not separate these actual individuals from these circumstances and conditions, turning them into pieces of data, who only exist to carry the theory. We do not "detach" these ideas spoken by these people from them, and then "arrange them to demonstrate an order among them that accounts for what is observed". Neither do we "change the ideas into a 'person', that is, set them up as distinct entities (for example, a value pattern, norm, belief system, and so forth) to which agency (or possible causal efficacy) may be attributed". We don't "redistribute them to 'reality' by attributing them to actors who can now be treated as representing the ideas" (p. 43-44)[26]. To Smith the first rule is to preserve the subjects, not to make them disappear by using terms like "formal organization" or "bureaucracy", not to forget that they are situated locally and historically, not to forget that they are situated in the actualities of their daily lives. Primacy belongs to the sensuous materiality of our daily lives, not to the conceptual order as if it sprang from Zeus' head. To Smith, we must remember Marx and his insistence "on returning to what people do, on seeing how social forms are produced by actual living individuals" (p. 57).

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[26] In her explanation, Smith (1990) draws on a description of a methodological approach in sociology which does precisely what she maintains we must not do if we wish neither to create a tautology nor subvert the subject: "Zetterberg is telling us how to take something that people actually said and make it over so that it can be treated as an attribute of an 'aggregate'. The process of getting from the original individuals who described, judged and prescribed to the end product of 'social beliefs', 'social valuations' and 'social norms' goes something like this: 1. Individuals are asked questions, presumably in an interview. 2. Their answers are then detached from the original practical determination in the interview situations and from the part the sociologist played in making them. They become data. Note that the questions are not data. The data (the recorded responses) are coded to yield 'descriptions', 'evaluations', and 'prescriptions' . . . . 3 . . . . [Statistically manipulate] the data to find the 'central tendencies' . . . 4. The original individuals are now changed into the sociologist's aggregate. Their beliefs, their values, and their norms are now attributed to this 'personage' as 'social beliefs', 'social values', and 'social norms'. It is then perfectly within the bounds of ordinary sociological thinking that social beliefs, norms and values be treated as causing behavior . . . ". (p. 45)

In Dorothy Smith's account, what we must do as researchers is to preserve the integrity of the social actors, not as alienated objects to be studied by dispassionate observers, but as subjects located in their own experiences, "while exploring and explicating" the power-based relations of the organization itself (1987, p. 111). As Jeffner Allen has pointed out, by focusing on discourse rather than on truth, we rid ourselves of every form of subject/object split, including that split between what is termed the researcher, and the subject who is objectified by the researcher. By recognizing my own inextricable involvement in this political process of creating meaning, I hope not to free myself, that is, to achieve transcendence, nor to presume that through self-reflection I can disengage myself from the will to power as I pursue knowing, but to recognize that I exist, as Dorothy Smith points out, on the same plane as those who agreed to talk to me, all inextricably involved in the discourses which shape us as they shape our understanding of the world.

However, to Smith, as well as to Mumby and Ranson et al. (1980), research into what she terms "social relations as actual practices . . . does not involve substituting the analysis, the perspectives and views of subjects, for the investigation by the [researcher]" (1987, p. 161). As Mumby points out, the description of the social context does not remain at the level of the "language and concepts naturally employed in that context" (1988, p. 146) by the social actors. A feminist/postmodernist approach demands of the researchers that they move beyond description, critique or emancipation to explication and evocation. If we understand the organization in Foucault's terms as "strategies of discourse", then my role as an organizational researcher is to focus on the strategies of discourse as they create and recreate asymmetrical gender power relations, and to remember, as Pringle (1990) points out, that "all discourses are produced from and themselves occupy sexually coded positions" (p. 180). I am not interested in revealing or discovering reality, or in proving someone's experience is more truth revealing than someone else's. I am interested in how strategies of discourse both position us and create us in what we term our organizations. How do we come to know what we ourselves create?

Mumby explicitly focuses on organizational narrative in his analysis of the methodological approach best suited to the critical examination of the organization as ideology. To Mumby narrative as a "particular discursive practice is not simply a neutral purveyor of information; rather, the act of storytelling is a political act that has consequences for the reproduction of organizational reality" (p. xv). It is "one of the principle [sic] symbolic structures that shapes reality for organizational members" (p. 15). However, to Mumby the usual approach to the study of organizational narrative is "descriptive". The research, which focuses on the discovery of the "shared systems of symbols and meaning . . . constituted and revealed in workers' routine communicative life" (p. 16), is based on the premise that "symbol systems [are] the most visible manifestations of organizational structure—they reflect the unconscious, taken-for-granted rule system that enables an organization to function coherently" (p. 15), a functionalist approach disavowed by Mumby (p. 16) as well as by myself. In the crisis of representation which is postmodernism, an ambivalence and "uncertainty about what constitutes social reality" (Lather, p. 1991, p. 90) is at odds with any strategy like narrative realism that seeks to uncover the real.

Instead, I will focus on the creation and recreation of relations of domination and subordination through strategies of discourse. As members of the organization we come to know the organization as we participate in the creation and recreation of the organization through narrative. When we speak to each other we are involved in this creation of the organization—when we repeat our memories of these conversations we are repeating how we have come to know these organizations. These conversations—initially with our colleagues, and later with the researcher—are our own way of putting into words what it is we know about the organization, our way of attaching meaning to our experiences, meaning which is but a temporary retrospective fixing, in Derrida's words. In this, our subjectivity, our experiences and our meanings which we attach to our experiences, meanings which we call knowledge of the organization, are all mediated by power and gender. Our words are neither the transparent nor the murky reflection of a reality, that if we could just achieve the proper distance we would be able to understand and reflect accurately. Our words, as we recreate our understanding of our involvement in that organization, are our understanding, our meaning. There is no reality that is better understood by others by virtue of their place. Each person makes that journey into the unknown in terms of her or his frame of reference, and that understanding is shaped by her or his involvement in the organization, mediated by power and gender. What people say, how they assign meaning to their understanding of the organization, is intimately and ultimately political, just as it is materially embedded and shaped by gender, and it is that process which feminist/postmodernist practice illuminates.

STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT THE METHODOLOGY: THE METHOD

Organizational narrative in the creation and recreation of domination and subordination through communication, or strategies of discourse in Foucault's terms, a place where language is the terrain "where differently privileged discourses struggle via confrontation and/or displacement" (Lather, 1991, p. 8), is my focus. The role of the researcher in a feminist/postmodernist study is, in Smith's terms, to explore and explicate how meaning is attached to the social relations within the organization, social relations which are mediated by knowledge and power and gender, materially based, and expressed discursively. As a caveat, it should be remembered that I as the researcher have no intention of attempting generalizations, no a-historical predictions or universalizations; I do not presume to undertake the positivist's or interpretivist's role of uncovering a foundational reality, whether objective or subjective. Instead reality is subject to multiple meanings, multiple readings, multiple interpretations where power, not reason, is the ultimate arbiter, where I am as positioned in relation to the dominant discourse by the links between power and gender and knowledge as those who talked to me and of whom I write. As Patti Lather (1991) reminds us, to write in the postmodern is to be evocative as opposed to didactic, to displace extended argument by "'a much messier form of bricolage [oblique collage of juxtapositions] that moves back and forth from positions that remains skeptical of each other though perhaps not always skeptical enough'", where ambiguities "proliferate rather than diminish meanings" (p. 10), where research practices need to be "viewed as much more inscriptions of legitimation than procedures that help us get closer to some 'truth' capturable via language" (p. 112).

In that sense then, the method became a series of unstructured talks with four newcomers, two male and two female, to various organizations [the organization itself not being the focus]. I wanted equal numbers of men and women, not to compare them, not to do a form of norm and deviation research, in Cameron's (1985) words, but to replicate what we face in our society and in our organizations: men and women working together and the complex implications that has for theory that is written by and based on men's experiences. I am a woman writing from a feminist perspective who has deliberately chosen to write about both women and men, in the same equal numbers as prevails in our larger society. I don't wish to pretend that all women speak for the generic "woman" or the the generic "human" [and just who might that be?], or that all men speak for the generic "man" (which presumably includes women, but actually cannot), or to attempt to achieve a synthesis of viewpoints, the idea of synthesis residing in the notion of opposing dualities which I specifically eschew.

These were not so much conversations or interviews between two people—both words inadequate for a feminist/postmodernist study which places gender/power relations in the forefront[27]—as the provision of a place for them to speak.

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[27] Following Nancy Fraser's (1987) comments on the notion of conversation in Habermas, and how it denies gender power differences, conversation does not seem to be the right word, and neither does interview, with its overtones of the subject/object duality which characterizes the acquisition of knowledge in Enlightenment thought, and which implicitly excludes women from the position of the subject who knows, relegating women only to the known (cf. Hekman, 1990). To Lather (1991) "As a mode of knowing the interview technique is an exemplary strategy of traditional humanism since such a device inscribes

The newcomers themselves provided the structure of the talks. After asking the initial question I said as little as possible; I did not wish to direct what these people said to me about their coming to know the organization. That does not mean that I assumed either the "passive non-interventionist" stance of ethnography or the "rhetorical and ideological innocence" of the emancipatory critiques (Lather, p. 96)—both are dependent on the assumption that I can abstract myself from these relations of power and knowledge and gender which I wish to explicate, which of course I cannot. I asked if they could describe for me in as much detail as they could remember conversations—the organizational narrative of Mumby, the discourses of power and knowledge of Foucault—which helped to develop their understanding of the organization and the meaning they attached to that understanding, the temporary retrospective fixing of meaning which to Derrida is the site of power. This had two parts, and I told the people who were speaking to me how I was going to approach this before we began, so they knew. When they first spoke to me, I asked simply "How did you come to know the organization?" This "speaking to me" about how they came to know was taped and transcribed, and given back to them to read. I told them at this point that they could add anything they liked, clarify anything, or cross anything out that they did not want used. At this juncture there was the opportunity to talk about what they saw in

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fundamental humanist values (that is, liberal pluralism, unmediated knowledge, participatory democracy, consensus among free subjects in the very practices it claims to be studying). . . . The focus of the interviews (unitary, sovereign subjects) reaffirmed the belief that people contain knowledge (they are self present subjects) and all that one has to do to have access to that knowledge is to engage in 'free' and 'unconstrained' discussions. . . . The interview technique is, of course, an exemplary instance of what Derrida has called the desire for presence, which is an effect of the dominant logocentrism in the academy" (p. 112).

the transcript. In the second part, I asked them to speak about "How other people see you in the organization?" This "speaking about" was again taped and transcribed, and given back to them, and they again had the opportunity to cross anything out, to add anything, to clarify anything, and to talk again about what they saw in the transcript, now that some time had passed. In the third part, I read and reread their transcriptions, recognizing that both of us were involved in a political dance of meaning, that in what they said, and what I thought they said, lay power.

It is from these transcriptions, then, that I tried to arrive at a sense of how they came to know and understand their particular organization, this ambiguous, materially-based socially constructed reality-in-flux, these strategies of discourse, where gender, power and knowledge, embedded materially, all intersect.

CRITERIA FOR A FEMINIST/POSTMODERNIST STUDY

In this section I will develop the feminist/postmodernist position that all criteria reflect time and place and political position, and as such, must be subjected to the same skepticism, the same doubt that is accorded any other possibly transcendental position. As Linda Nicholson (1990) has written, there are no criteria which can be justified outside their historical place, no criteria which can stand outside their own metanarrative. Reason, objectivity, impartiality, universality, generalizability—all are confined within Enlightenment dualities, all seek to justify, as both Dorothy Smith and Anthony Giddens have noted, a tautological argument. They all work to ensure the removal of the observer from the social context at the same time as they work to ensure the discovery of the "correct" reality; they all work to remove the knower from the known. But, if all criteria represent some aspect of power, how can we, in Seyla Benhabib's terms, not simply validate the status quo by declaring all criteria suspect and therefore maintaining in power that which already is? The answer lies in Spivak's contention that since it is impossible for either any person or any theory to stand outside relations of gender and power and knowledge, the politics of decentering, of deconstruction, of remembering our own privilege and the privileges of others, and thus of the necessity to both deconstruct the margins of our own and of other's privilege and to reject closure in favor of doubt as we use metanarrative as our companion, as a place of enablement, rather than as "a declaration of war", must be applied to any criteria which we would use. The politics of deconstruction are not the politics of modernist thought, which rely on oppositional dualities to decide what is knowledge and what it is not. The deconstruction of oppositional dualities are displacements of all the violent hierarchies which structure our thoughts: truth/falsity, absolute/relative, all that which has given us certainty in a world that can never be certain. But as Patti Lather (1991) points out, to say that if we cannot know everything then we can know nothing is to miss the point. In a world of flux and indeterminacy, nothing can be understood or known as either/or; that is itself seen as a discursive strategy which seeks to legitimate itself outside of time and place.

The criteria which is implicit in feminist/postmodernist theory, rather than acting as a transcendental category, as a way of justifying truth and truth speaking and ultimately reality itself, is a form of analysis which seeks to deconstruct the centre, to deconstruct the confining dualities of Enlightenment thought, and to recognize our inevitable involvement in discourse, where power, gender and knowledge meet. The question is whose speaking voice will these criteria provide a place for, and whose speaking voice will they silence? At the same time, however, as we recognize our own inevitable involvement in discourse, feminist/postmodernist theory cannot reject, as Spivak points out, the onto-phenomenological moment inherent in feminism/postmodernism. This moment draws on critical theory as defined by Marx in 1843 as "'the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age'", struggles and wishes which shed "light on the character and bases" of domination and subordination (Fraser, 1987, p. 31). Recognizing our own inevitable involvement in relations of power and knowledge does not mean that exploring and explicating how things work is beyond us. It is not a question of who is right, who is wrong, who is rational, who is emotional, who has a grasp of reality, who does not, but, in Dorothy Smith's term, "how things work, how our world is put together, how things happen to us as they do" (Smith, 1990, p. 34). Or, to add to both Mumby and Foucault, in an understanding where organizations are defined by words, how we ourselves both create and are created by words, how strategies of discourse, embedded materially, both position us and are resisted by us. This focus does not deny the self or materiality, as Foucault would have it. It does not presume that the self is wholely created within discourse, Flax's perceptive criticism of Foucault, nor ignore materiality, Dorothy Smith's criticism. Instead, and within these criticisms, it focuses on where we work as defined by words, rooted in the actualities of our daily lives there, and amenable to explication.

VI. FINDINGS: DIANE, ALAN, ELLEN, FRANK

How did these people, two men and two women, come to know the organization in which they worked? More specifically, how did these people come to know and to participate in the creation and recreation of strategies of discourse which are our organizations? Here it is not the generic, generalizable experiences—and I don't believe that there ever are such—of the newcomer which concerns me. It is those experiences where we come to know by doing which give us insight into the "relations of ruling" that are my concern, relations which are expressed in language. How do we struggle to find our place, how do we struggle against being "put in our place"? How are we enmeshed by the contradictions, impossible to reconcile, which are inherent in our place of work, those contradictions between what we are told and what we come to know through doing our work?

The four newcomers whom I talked to over a period of a year worked in law firms, educational institutions, and consulting firms. Their specific firms and institutions provided the context, undoubtedly important, for how they came to know, but that is not my focus. To use a somewhat imperfect analogy, it is not the topography of the landscape, however fascinating it might be, but the traveller—the one who creates and is created by the strategies of discourse which are our organizations, and the one who knows, that knowledge a construct of gender and power—whom I wish to place first and foremost in this discussion.

Each of the people whom I talked to told me, usually by returning to the same point again and again, how they constructed their own way of understanding this new organization in terms of what became of concern to them. None of them walked into the new organization saying "This is how I will understand it". Rather, their understanding developed in conjunction with what became important to them as they went about doing their work. In a different organization, their understanding would have been different. It was through this concern, then, that they perceived the form that the relations of ruling took, as they themselves participated in the creation and recreation of the strategies of discourse which are our organizations.

DIANE

One woman spoke of coming to know the organization in terms of how impossible it was to fit into the organization if she did not act like the dominant males who controlled the organization, a well-placed law firm. Since to be subordinate was, in the firm's terms, to act like a woman, to be dominant, and in a complex equation, successful, one had to act like a man. To Diane* that meant putting status and hierarchy first and foremost rather than her own notions of rationality and efficiency. It meant, for example, coming to know that she could not work with the female support staff [there were no men] in the egalitarian and rational way that initially made sense to her, but to distance herself from them—to dispense with gender allegiances, and to work within the hierarchical structure of the firm. It meant treating her own work as a priority and being prepared to fight for that rating, whether or not it was in actuality, which initially to her had seemed quite silly. And for her the most difficult of the firm's terms meant recognizing that allegiance to one's workmates, expressed in a number of ways, but primarily through time, was more important than allegiance to one's own family. Finally, it meant that not only did she need to subscribe to these tenets; she also needed to advertise that she accepted, moreover believed in, them. As Foucault would argue, subordination, in order to be complete, must be internalized.

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*All names and certain identifying features have been changed to protect the respondents' identities.

However, she only slowly discerned how important it was in the organization to act, to talk, to think, to value doing things in ways that recognized the pre-eminency of how the men in the firm understood the world. In an organization that paradoxically enough depended on the written word, which literally could not be what it was without its disputatious and therefore litigious possibilities, there was very little feedback or direction given to newcomers—and what little existed, was either critical or nebulous. In this case it could be argued that the lack of any explicit feedback or direction is a situation which benefits those in power because unwritten rules can constantly be manipulated to maintain the status quo, but written rules invite challenge or dispute—and who better to know than lawyers? Diane spoke of how difficult it was to determine either how she was doing, or even what she was supposed to be doing, particularly with the support staff, who were all female. What she found was that her work was either criticized or it just "disappeared", and she was caught between hoping that no feedback meant that everything was fine, she was doing well, or that it simply wasn't bad enough to warrant criticism. Performance appraisals, seldom given anyway, were either negative or carefully neutral;

newcomers like Diane were forced to depend on the development of their own sources to find out what they thought was "really going on", what people "really thought" about how they were doing. But this lack of feedback also meant to her that she felt constantly off-balance, never sure if she was interpreting the situation correctly. She told me how uncertain she felt about where she stood, how she was doing, and what she was supposed to be doing, how she felt caught between her own assessment and her lack of knowledge about what the others really thought:

> I think I do a reasonably competent job. I've compiled my day book and I'm debating whether or not to let anybody see it, but I would really like some honest feedback, for someone to look at it, and say, yes, this is good work, [or] it's s— work, or whatever. Because I've had none whatsoever during the wintertime to know exactly where I stand. . . . At Christmas-time one concern they had was that I wasn't results oriented. And I have asked lawyers, I have said, 'What is results oriented?' And they go, 'I don't know what it is'. . . . Well, I do know what the client needs, I don't see where I've a problem in that. . . . So how can they say I'm not results oriented? I think I am. And there's so many ambiguities. And [such] vagueness in terms of what I thought they wanted, versus what they thought they wanted versus what they got—there's so much vagueness there. They're not willing to give adequate feedback, they certainly don't give it in a constructive fashion—they're good managers, they're bad [teachers]. . . . You need to teach people systems on how to accomplish a goal. And that is precisely what this [problem was]—in terms of my struggling with what am I allowed to give

support staff without offending them, how do I research a problem effectively. . . . "

Thus in a milieu where feedback was sparse or nebulous, where even the few written appraisals did not reflect what was actually said in partners' meetings, which is what one of the female lawyers reported to her, Diane struggled with what she thought would be the correct thing to do in terms of dealing with the support staff, and what was actually the thing that should be done in order to fit in, to be one of the lawyers. Although seminars were held by the support staff to indicate what they did, according to Diane they were never clear about exactly what they did and did not do—and neither was anyone else. By never specifying, by keeping what was said about what was to be done deliberately blurry, Diane maintained that this "great grey area" worked to keep the hierarchical structure of the firm intact. As she said, "Because status and hierarchy are such an issue in that firm, I am particularly sensitive about treading on others' toes. . . . But in a lot of respects I'm inhibited by my own actions for fear of offending these other people, because I might be asking them to do something that by rights I should be doing". Diane felt that she had to be extra careful not to offend anyone, but this also worked to keep her in her place. The firm manipulated women's feelings that other people's feelings were sacrosanct to keep women from exerting the authority necessary to show that they were partner material[*]. In an environment that stressed that the firm was "one big happy family" it was difficult to confront the daddies with issues that made everybody uncomfortable, particularly when women in general are to smooth things out, and not be confrontational. Blurring the lines between what the support staff did and what she could ask the support staff to do kept Diane in line—should she be doing this, rather than the librarian or the secretary, questions about power that remained carefully unanswered by the lawyers as well as by the support staff.

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[*] This is similar to Arlie Hochschild's (1983) argument in *The Managed Heart.*

This was also a quandary that to Diane the men did not feel: secretaries acting as "office wives" to the male lawyers—but never to the female lawyers—were not uncommon in the firm[#]. What that meant for the male lawyers who had these "office wives" and the female lawyers who did not was quite complex. It meant both more work for the women lawyers than the male lawyers because the men had secretaries who did more work for them, and less power for the women lawyers because they did not have access to a servant/wife/secretary the way the men did. However, what the secretaries did was not necessarily seen as valuable work, although what they did, the men did not have to do. As Diane commented, one of the senior partners had an extremely competent secretary, but she was viewed in this way:

> Jokes were made about A.B's secretary. . . . They say if she wasn't there, he would be lost in some foreign country never to be seen again—he's that kind of man. [He] never knows what's going on. . . . But here he is, he's in his early 50s, and he's got his wife, er his secretary, who's essentially taking care of him in the same way, but people accept it. . . . They say, A.B. has a

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[#] This issue was thoroughly explored in Rosabeth Kanter (1977), *Men and Women of the Corporation* in her chapter on secretaries as office wives.

> brilliant mind. They justify his disorganization as a symptom of brilliance, whereas I think with a similar person . . . they would define it as complete disorganization and probably incompetent. I think some people privately do find it shocking, his behaviour, but it's accepted.

Thus within the particular cultural milieu of the firm it was easy for the women support staff to serve the men, for the men to expect it, and for no one to state that a great deal of extra work done by a secretary was anything other than what any good secretary would do. It was no reflection on the competence of this senior male lawyer although the work his secretary did helped to maintain his brilliant reputation.

However, although a different relationship needed to be forged between the female lawyers and the female support staff, considering that status and hierarchy were also inextricably linked to gender, determining a new relationship between a female lawyer and a female support staff-person was fraught with difficulty. If a female lawyer was egalitarian in her dealings with the support staff, as Diane felt she was, she trumpeted her allegiance to a complex equation where female gender and lower status were intimately linked. If she was not egalitarian, she was not necessarily rewarded with the support that many of the female support staff were both required to give and gave to the male lawyers. For example, it took Diane some time to understand how important it was not to do any kind of secretarial work. Secretarial work was women's work. It was important that even when she was not busy, and the secretary was, Diane not type her own work, or Xerox, or fax. Lawyers did none of those things; they used dictaphones, and fought over secretarial access as a way of proving how important they were. Not ever typing, no matter how pressing the deadline, advertised how busy the lawyer was, important when "billable hours" translated into success and money, the twin measures of status, as well as ensuring that gender hierarchies were maintained. As Diane stressed to me, she was uncomfortable with the hierarchy—she took "a very egalitarian approach to the division of labour"—plus she felt that it was a waste of time for her to sit and do nothing: "if I've got nothing to do, if I'm sitting around waiting around for her to put my revisions in there, there's no point in me interrupting her work . . . just so that I do not taint my status with actually doing something so mundane". But she admitted that if she did sit down and do what she needed to do to get the work out, ostensibly the most important criteria to judge lawyers by, "the cues are there. . . . I would only sit down at the word processor . . . if there was really something that I wanted out right away. . . . But people would joke and say 'Hi, Betty. Gee you look different'—you know, it's always that joke, but it was pointing out that I wasn't really supposed to be there. . . . Or if I was typing a fax sheet in the mail room, then it's like, 'What the h- are you doing that for?' [The lawyers] asked those questions not in quite those words, and it was always done jokingly, but the message was the same". By pitching in and doing it herself she was advertising three things: first, that her work was less important because if it were really important a secretary would do it; second, that she must not be very busy if she had time to do it herself, and third, that she was expressing allegiance with the secretaries and not to the hierarchy within the firm. As such, by sitting down at the typewriter or sending a fax, or doing word processing, Diane, rather than indicating that her first priority was to get the work done, seemed in the eyes of others to be indicating that she was not really a lawyer [a man, or a person who acts like one by never doing mundane tasks] but was really a secretary [a woman, or a person who acts like one by doing mundane tasks].

Recognizing that she should not just sit down and do what was necessary, however, was complicated by an additional factor—the secretaries were busy, and senior lawyers took precedence over newcomers. As she describes the situation, when she found out that the secretary whom she shared with another, more senior lawyer was too busy to do her work, Diane tried to find other secretaries who would fit her work in. But, as she pointed out,

> I had the unfortunate circumstance—and I don't like blaming other people for difficulties, but the secretary I was working with—Linda—was the secretary for myself and for Murray. Well, Murray is a little bit of a . . . nice martinet, is probably the best way to describe him, very uptight. Linda's like me—she has a relaxed attitude towards life—and wasn't too keen on getting stuff—I mean the rest of the secretaries—I dealt with two other secretaries, other than her, and I could pretty much count on no longer than a 24 hour turn-around on my stuff. With Linda stuff stretched to ten days. And after a certain point, because I could not get stuff back from her, because there is a hierarchical thing that happens in the law office, the lawyer gets precedent on his stuff over Linda, so I recognized that and thought ok . . . Linda was conscientious, but she's inexperienced and just not that fast, and Murray's a real producer and being in litigation, probably had some pretty heavy files to deal with, and was pumping the work out, and I got . . . squeezed through the cracks somehow. So my solution to the

> problem was to go out and ask other secretaries if they had spare time would they mind doing this, and I would always preface it—I'd say Linda, and sometimes I would ask Linda to do it, I'd say, "Linda can you get this done for me, or would you prefer that I go and ask someone else?", and she'd be quite honest—she'd say, "No, Murray's got me doing something else, it would work really well if you could find someone. Come back to me if you can't". But there's always someone who's not that busy. I would have my pets, and I would . . . go to them, and say, "Look, Linda is really busy with Murray's stuff, could you possibly squeeze this in at all, and if not, I'll go and find someone else". . . . And I never had any feedback that I treated the staff poorly. . . . At any rate, I did that for a while . . . and I thought it was a good use of the firm's resources, to sort of spread the work around, use Linda as my primary secretary when she was available, [and when she wasn't available] go elsewhere. Provided the other secretaries didn't mind, I didn't see what the problem was.

However, what might have seemed a logical approach to the problem of scarce resources was unacceptable in the firm: eventually the office manager went to the other—and more senior—lawyer, stated that Diane's approach was unacceptable, and said "You guys have to be able to solve this problem. We don't want Diane going elsewhere". What was at base an issue of status remained that, and in a complicated way the status quo was reasserted, as Diane pointed out:

> So Murray in a very nice fashion—he's a year older than me, and he was very fatherly about it, and I actually thought he handled it really well, he just . . . focused on the problem and said he didn't realize that I wasn't

> getting enough access to Linda and said "On occasion I've got things I have to have done and if you've got a problem please come and talk to me", so I lived with that, and actually that did work out—there was one instance where I absolutely had to have something done really quickly and I asked Murray if there was a problem—I mean there was an interesting control issue there about who gets to decide and status and all that jazz . . . However, the closer we got to Christmas, and I could never identify my stuff as being sufficiently pressing that it absolutely had to be done. My argument is that something shouldn't be labelled rush unless it genuinely is so don't cry wolf, because the secretaries know—I mean we'd make jokes about that—I'd tell them, I'd say, this isn't rush, and they'd say, well yeah, with some people everything's rush. And it's hogging resources that I think is really unfair. But at any rate, unfortunately with Linda my stuff would just literally [sit there]. George [one of her advisors, and responsible for one of her performance appraisals] would come in and say, "Do you have this done?", and I'd say, "Well, it's sitting on Linda's desk waiting to be typed and as soon as I can get it back from her I'll give it to you"—and it was really unfortunate in that respect . . . because the criticism of my work was that—they never seemed to criticize me for my analysis, but my timeliness has been poor most of the winter.

What Murray did by hogging all of Linda's time was to advertise to everyone how busy he was, and by extension, how important and powerful he was. What Diane did not realize until later was that 'rush' was a code word for status, for who had power in the hierarchy. She also learned what the firm wanted her to know—that work was done by the secretaries on the basis of status, and that it remained at the discretion of the senior lawyer: Murray 'let' her work be done ahead of his, but she had to ask him, she just couldn't say to the secretary, do this right now. To Diane, to declare rush was to "hog resources" which she thought was "unfair" and the secretaries thought was silly. By hogging the secretary, of course, Murray was also asserting his power, and Diane acceded to that, by not fighting with him over the secretary's time. As she pointed out, she really had no choice: the "senior lawyer gets precedence" with the secretary, and lawyers don't do secretarial work. In this case, she found out both how hierarchical the firm was and how much you had to act like a man, even if you were a woman and the implications were quite different. As a man, if you deferred to your senior, you were indicating that you knew that by doing so, your time would come. But if you were a woman, your deference was taken for granted; there was no link, as there was for men, between deference and advancement. Ultimately, Diane's actions were in conflict with the ways things were supposed to be done at the firm. It was a challenge to a culture which placed a great deal of emphasis on status and hierarchy, not on efficiency, or rationality or teamwork or the kind of allegiances between women that might have developed if more egalitarian relationships had been fostered between the support staff and the lawyers. As it were, the secretary/wife/servant role of the female support staff and the gender hierarchy it underscored worked to keep all the women in the firm in their place, the female lawyers included.

The firm also saw itself, not surprisingly given the emphasis on hierarchy, as "one big happy family". This is perhaps a fine metaphor for men, because after all, when fathers die, the sons take the place of the fathers, but with its overtones of [sexual] subservience for women, it's not a good metaphor for women. According to Diane, this also required that the firm as "one big happy family" be understood as one's "first family". One's real family was of secondary importance. Work responsibilities and responsibilities to one's work mates—primarily in terms of time spent—took precedence over family responsibilities, subtly expressed in a number of ways. For example, it was understood that lawyers had wives whose job it was to look after the kids; lawyers lacking wives, meaning female lawyers, had nannies. Daycares were for secretaries. Heathclub fees were picked up by the firm, but daycare fees were not. When the firm moved the establishing of a daycare on site had been rejected as unimportant, whereas establishing a smoke free environment was. The female lawyers, with the exception of Diane, used nannies; the male lawyers with small children had wives who stayed at home. In explaining all of this, Diane recounted a conversation with a senior male lawyer at the Christmas party: "Fred was asking me how my nanny problems were working out, and I laughed and slapped him on the arm and said, 'Fred, I don't make enough money to pay a nanny. My kid goes to daycare'. They become so out of touch they have no conception of what my reality is". It was important in the firm that someone other than the lawyer had primary responsibility for child care—no having to leave to pick the kids up. The hierarchy that existed was a gender hierarchy, not in the purely physical sense, but in the cultural sense, where how men understood the world structured the organization.

Finally, the form that "dues paying" in the firm took, although a subject of struggle, was generally one in which the women much more than the men found it difficult to participate. The male lawyers wanted a "rah rah team"; the women lawyers saw that as obsequious. As Diane commented,

> There's some power struggles going on between the women lawyers and the male lawyers. The latest batch of students are mostly men, and the senior women lawyers are really offended by their glad handing, sucky attitudes towards the senior male lawyers—the male partners in particular. And the same problem occurred with the group ahead of us, who were again mostly men. We were mostly women. The male partners, the men, weren't particularly impressed by our particular group because they felt we were boring, dull and interestingly enough, they didn't define us as a very cohesive group. That was actually an issue that arose before Christmas time. For whatever reason, they said that we weren't particularly cohesive. . . . And as Lorna [one of the senior women lawyers] said to me at one point, she said, 'You guys, you don't jump up and entertain the partners that really like that', but I think that what she was getting at was we weren't a bunch of sycophants. But the women [lawyers] couldn't stand the group ahead of us because they couldn't stand that sucking up. . . . the people who stand on the table, drink their faces off, and entertain [the senior men in the firm]. Make fools of themselves, basically.

Diane pointed out that the culture of the firm depended at least partially on drinking together as a form of bonding, but that was both too precarious and too difficult for the women—a woman who drinks may be sexual prey, not a drinking buddy—and many of the women had other lives, other duties, whereas the men did not. Fundamental contradictions within the culture of the firm itself meant that, by Christmas, Diane had figured out that "you could be a geek as a man, and still make it, and be pretty much an ordinary woman, and not make it". In the firm you didn't necessarily have to be a man to be a lawyer, but you did need to act in ways that the partners in the firm, eight out of nine who were men, were comfortable with, and that meant acting and thinking and talking in ways that they would have acted and thought and talked. You had to become "one of the boys", and in that statement, there's no room for women.

ALAN

To Alan, coming to know the organization was inextricably linked to the problem of ferreting out what needed to be done to fit in, to be like the others. In this organization that meant acquiring the necessary trappings of adulthood: marriage, a mortgage, and kids, but at the correct time, an important corollary. The organization was a place where stability was the pre-eminent value; as a young, single male he doubted that without marriage and a mortgage he would be looked upon as having the necessary stability for advancement. Nevertheless, there was no irreconcilable conflict as there was with Diane; marriage and children, rather than a sign of doubtful allegiance, were seen in the firm as a sign of stability. As Phyllis Rose (1985) has noted in another context, the tensions between marriage and career, family and work which pull women in disparate directions, reinforce men, tensions which also serve to reinforce gender hierarchies both at home and at work.

Nor did he feel the same conflict that Diane experienced, either with the hierarchical structure of the organization or in his relationship with the wholely female support staff. What had been so conflictual, so problematic, for Diane, was hardly noticed by Alan. The conscious difference between what the organization demanded and who she was, a source of much conflict for Diane, was not at all apparent to Alan. When he described the organization and what it was, what it stood for, and who he was, there was no difference, only a sense that he had yet to acquire all the trappings of the others. Neither did he seem to experience that sense of never knowing quite what to do that was so noticeable for Diane as she came to know the organization. What Alan experienced, instead, was the affirmation of being welcomed, of being let in on how the organization worked, the structure of which he agreed with, that he could see the reason for. Once he acquired these necessary trappings of adulthood, he could see no reason why he could not participate fully as a valued and welcomed member of the organization.

How did he come to know the organization, then, and his place within it? Although he describes the firm as conservative, academic and "nerdy", he is not interested in their politics—what interests him is their common marital status. To Alan "everybody's kind of married, and goes home after work to their families—there's not a lot of going for beers after work". Stability is important to the firm, and marriage and a mortgage supplies that stability. He states that the firm wants "people to get tied down with a mortgage and kids and keep working—you have to keep making money. . . . That's how I'd probably feel if I were a partner. As long as you're not committed to anything, there's nothing to stop you from, on a whim, saying, 'I want to go somewhere else, live somewhere else, do something else'". In contrast he's "young, male, and single". Although he works really hard—twelve hour days and most weekends—he doesn't see his obvious commitment to hard work as enough, not even with the success of his Christmas skit when his David Letterman take-off twigged the firm's fancy. Hard work alone is not enough, as one of his fellow newcomers found out, a woman whom Alan admitted worked harder than the rest of them, but wasn't kept on. It has to be combined with the kind of stability that the firm values.

Because he's seen as "more socially active" than the others, this is a description that seems to him to be somewhat ambivalent in its possibilities. On one hand it conjures up the lack of stability that could be a problem in a "very conservative firm"; on the other hand his assessment of the organization is that it is slowly recognizing that it must change and that having someone who can bring in clients is an advantage. Although he admits that a lot of people "can't figure out why I'm still [unmarried]", he thinks that he's seen as "fairly bright", and as someone who would work well with clients because "I think they sense that there's kind of an ease in my manner with people", but he admits that "I don't know if that's correct or not". However, although he emphasizes that "we're going to have to be a little more aggressive in bringing in clients", and he sees himself as capable of that, he doesn't see the firm as making a concerted effort to hire more aggressive people. To Alan the new people being hired on as articling students "aren't a lot different" from him: "they're very bright, they're personable . . . but it's funny, I don't see any real conscious effort on the part of the firm to say, OK, let's get some business promoters in here". To Alan, "I think what they want to do is change internally and . . . to keep in the type of people that they've always brought in, but just subtly, maybe change the philosophy a bit", but it's so subtle that "quite honestly, I haven't seen a whole lot of that". To him change will be undertaken very slowly in this firm. It will not involve changing the types of people the firm hires, but convincing the kind of people the firm has always hired and will continue to hire that they have to change their ways. What comes through so strongly is that he is just like all the others; what remains to be done so that whatever hint of instability there is, is effaced, is to become even more like the others—that is, to get married. And Alan concurs that that is a necessary step.

When I asked him how he came to know the organization specifically, he answered that it was by watching, witnessing the dynamics, overhearing a conversation: "in those 30 seconds you see how a decision can be made and how they go about doing it". Alan's anecdotes about conversations overheard imply inclusivity, unlike Diane's, whose point again and again was that she never really knew what was going on; she either heard messages that conflicted, leaving her to figure it out, or she heard nothing at all. Alan's anecdotes are about watching, listening, observing rules that everybody followed, rules that were not in dispute. Alan talks again and again about how comfortable he was made to feel, how much help he receives from the other lawyers, about the guy across the hall whom he runs in and talks to ten times a day and never feels like he "bugs him". Unlike Diane, he never talks about how unapproachable the senior people were. Alan talks about how much he was taught and nurtured so he would know what to do and how to do it the firm's way, which is something Diane never felt she knew, and always felt she had to figure it out on her own. Alan talks about those in the firm who were genuinely interested and friendly; what Diane talks about is how cold and distant they were, and how concerned they were about an image that Diane felt distinctly uncomfortable with.

How did Alan know how he was doing in the firm? Although Alan admitted that he didn't "get a ton of feedback, especially along those lines . . . you don't get, you really don't get a lot of feedback, other than, 'That's good', 'That's what I was looking for', 'Thank you, that will really help'", he thinks, just from how they act around him, that they like him. This he puts down to the fact that he is a "pretty easy going type of person" and points out as evidence that "for the most part they're pretty relaxed and I find them pretty laid back, they're able to joke with me". Later he says that although they don't say he's a great guy, or that they really like him, he's "had pretty good feedback on my work so I sense . . . a certain level of confidence and ease". He describes two incidents: in one, he was in a lawyer's office, giving him some photocopies, and although he had worked for him on quite a complicated case, had heard nothing initially. But on this occasion, five or six weeks later, when Alan was moving to another area, the fellow said, "That's too bad, we're really going to miss you on this side. You really helped out, you did some good work". In another case, Alan explains how he knew that they had confidence in him, and implicitly, how they indicated that he was a valued member of the firm. He was taken to a client meeting, and allowed to speak on an issue. Then the client was explicitly told that he could contact Alan, that he had done the work and was the most familiar with the issue. This "pretty good feedback" and the joking around the lawyers do with him, indicate to him that they like him, that he's one of the group, that he's welcomed there.

And finally, what was a really important issue to Diane was barely mentioned by Alan. Unlike Diane who never knew what she was supposed to do compared to what the support staff was supposed to do, to Alan the support staff were supposed to be treated with respect—the firm makes a point of having occasional parties where everyone attends—but there's no question on Alan's part that a "secretary . . . does what the lawyer asks her to do", although he emphasized that you don't "always [walk] them through every step of the way". His concern was not with what he should do versus what they should do, Diane's conundrum. In his eyes, the support staff was there to help him, nothing more. There were no muddled allegiances, no talk of hierarchy. What Alan did stress, unlike Diane, was that the secretaries knew more than they thought they knew, including his own secretary, who had fifteen years experience.

To Alan, coming to know the organization rested, not on words, but on actions, conveyed through work: "like in anything, you judge people by their actions more than by their words. If they say nothing and give you work, you're happy". It's the work that is the key, "If they say, 'Great job', and never give you another file, I'd be a little worried". But fitting in, and ultimately becoming a partner, rests on more than that. As Alan commented, "I'm not a partner, I'm not privy to the meetings, but I don't think your billable hours are crucial". To Alan, "number one is ability", but after that "I think that what they look at is if you've made it through five years of working here, you probably fit in well enough, you're probably bright enough, smart enough, you're probably socially, er, you fit in the firm well enough, that you should be able to become a partner". In Alan's assessment of what the firm is all about, you don't get hired unless you're smart, but you don't get kept unless you fit in—and that means acting pretty much like everybody else.

ELLEN

Ellen's coming to know the organization was inextricably linked to the slow emergence, like a photographic negative, of a darker picture of organizational life. She had begun not knowing very much about organizations, other than a belief in everything working the way it's supposed to: if you work hard you get ahead; it's what you know, not who you are that matters; and found that that wasn't the case. Her coming to know was a slow process of disillusionment and disentitlement, of doors closed, opportunities constricted. As she states, "you begin where everything is rosy, and then everything isn't so rosy. That's like anything else—the more you come to know something, the more you begin to see, and I guess you begin to think about it more, as opposed to just accepting everything, where everything just glosses past your eyes, and what you see is what is, and maybe you're being bombarded with all these things, and then after a while you begin to be more selective". Later she goes back to that issue of selectivity and belief, stating that:

> It's like looking at something the first time. When you look at an inkblot all you see is black and white, and then the more you look at it, the more you discern shapes and nuances of black and all the rest of it. One thing's that interesting—when you first go into an organization you tend to accept what

> other people say about [the organization]—you take their word as gospel, whether it's related to people, or whether it's related to situations, and over time you begin to form your own opinions, or to see where your thoughts differ from what you originally thought.

How does that process of greater discernment work? To Ellen, partially through accumulation, partially through more nuanced observation: "There's a lot of history, there's a lot of gossip . . . your knowledge of an organization has to come from within. You have to feel comfortable, people have to feel comfortable with you. It's a slow accumulation of knowledge". As an example of more nuanced observation, she talks about the difference between what she expected, and what she found: "You like to think that everything works properly because I'd always been outside a structure. I took it for granted that structures worked the way you thought they did, but then you get in and quite quickly you see what you see and you don't . . . like the feeling". As to how that happens, Ellen notes that "maybe we begin to look at what we see and assign a value or a quality to it—you like what you see here, you don't like what you see there, relating to what your personal thoughts are, what your personal values are" and then she illustrates that with the following observation: "I see in our institution what is very interesting is our president and vice-presidents are all male, they have in common that they are all tall and slim and athletic, and not necessarily there because they have the biggest brains, or the best brains. . . . We are [in] the mold, the traditional mold still". She goes on to point out how much the continuation of that tradition initially surprised her, but concluded on a fatalistic note, that it was the same everywhere: "although people in their 40s are basically the people in charge, they are perpetuating the values of an older generation. . . . All institutions are pretty traditional, and I guess that's an interesting thing to learn. Few women in the upper levels, and things work in the way they work in other institutions".

What she learned as she slowly came to know the organization was how political the organization was, how much depended on the art of hiding one's true feelings and thoughts, of the necessity of providing a surface. All of this surprised and disturbed her, as she relates in these following examples: "all I know is the number of times I hear around our department how someone is not doing a good job as an [administrator], not at all doing a good job, and yet to turn around and to encounter them the next time and there's the handshake and the smiles and the discussion as if you're totally equal and you think . . . that you can't really let people know what you think of them. So you have to put up with the others. And I wouldn't have known any of these things, and as I've said, in another year I will have learned more". However, she is not sure if she could participate in what to her is necessary deceitfulness, as she describes watching a manager operate: "After a year of watching what he has to put up with . . . I don't know if I would want to; I don't know if I could be as nice to people who deep down made me sick or turned me off as you have to do in that role. Smile at their face and deep down know that you just dislike them intensely, but you're forced to deal with them on a regular basis. Maybe I'm at the point in my life where it's not worth it".

Part of coming to know the organization was learning both about what her job actually was, and thus where she was placed within the organization, how hierarchical the organization was, and how cavalierly the organization communicated such information. She learned that she was not in faculty development and thus an academic staff member as she had initially thought, but in instructional development and thus a member of the non-academic staff, with all its attendant status anxieties. As she says, "Two weeks after I started . . . somebody said, are you going to the faculty barbeque, and I said 'No, I hadn't got a notice about it', so I asked [my boss] and [he said] 'You can't go', and I said, 'Why not?', and he said, 'Because you're not faculty'. And that's when it really hit me, the difference between faculty and non-faculty. And then it slowly sunk in that yes the secretary and I were level, and I would be getting these notices for the non-academic staff association. . . . The other half of it is, when you put non in front of any word, it becomes a very negative association".

Just as Ellen learned that her job was less valued than she had thought, so she learned how low salaries were for women, and ultimately, how arbitrarily they were assigned. She points out that: "One thing you know, the value that the institution puts on us, is what they pay us [the women] for what we do. That tells us what they think of us, and at [this institution] that's not a very good feeling because . . . we're not paid very well". She told me how a department of all women, unable to find anyone suitable for a managerial position [only women had applied], "raised the salary by $10,000, readvertised, interviewed, and hired a man. So now we have this very young nice looking fellow, sitting in [this managerial position] the salary is nice and high, people who applied the first time would not think to apply again"[*]. This sense of the essential arbitrariness of salary as it is related to credentials was compounded for her by an incident that she relates at length:

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[*] Naomi Wolf (1991) has written that employers admit that they weed out women applicants by readvertising the job at a higher salary.

> We had an interesting thing happen—it discouraged me, or made me feel sad that it could happen, and that's when we were hiring for a new position in our department. . . . We advertised it . . . as wanting a Ph.D but we didn't get anybody with a Ph.D but we did get a number of people with a Masters so we decided that the Masters would be the minimal criteria so we had a selection committee of six people, and at the end of the interview process we had two people selected. The three of us who worked in the department selected one who had finished her Masters, and the other three selected the second person. And so when it came right down to it, [her boss] made the choice that the one who we had to work with would be chosen. At which point he went up to [his boss] and his boss said, 'Fine, this is the salary I'm offering' and her boss said, 'But that's not the salary we had going for the position'. And in fact what happened, if we had selected the one [the senior administrator] wanted, she would have been paid $5000 more a year than the one we did select. In other words our senior administrator just arbitrarily said, 'Pick the one I want, she gets $36,000 a year; pick the one I don't—and this is [the one] with a Masters, eh?—'pick the one I don't, she gets $31,000 a year'. . . . I hate to think that can happen anywhere, and I hate to think our organization doesn't have something to prevent that lack of, that inconsistency. So this woman to me is being totally underpaid, not that she's making that much less than I but I still think it's a kick in the teeth, and the fact that he is able to say, 'I'll pay this one this much, and the

> fact that the one he chose had not completed her Masters . . . whereas the one we had [chosen] had completed her thesis, which was one of the criteria for the job. So no matter what, no matter what your structure, no matter how rigidly it's defined, still up there, people can do what they want to, there's a certain leeway granted".

This same sense of arbitrariness is reflected in Ellen's assessment of how experience as it translates into salary is understood in the organization, and how her experience could be discounted when a very narrow definition was used. To Ellen, "the one thing that's coming to me recently is that to be older and more capable is not necessarily good in an organization. . . . I think capability gets you the job in the first place. I think in my own case it had to be capability because my age was against me given that some people in applying would have been a good ten years younger". Ellen believes that her experience is of value to her work, but it is not valued by the institution, and that affects how she feels about herself. Ellen comments that "the sum of my parts does not give me much experience in their eyes. Now one thing I'm learning is that you're dealing with a piece of paper that tells you what a salary structure is. I think my experience stands me in very good stead because my varied experience equates to the varied aspects of my job but your director of personnel or whoever that is says 'Sorry, you have only contract work', doesn't give you any years of experience and so on and so forth. So I'm learning about the organization".

If how salary and experience are awarded is essentially arbitrary, if credentials do not necessarily translate into more money and higher status, what does one need in order to advance? In an institution that is not what it seems on the surface, what Ellen is finding out is this: "I'm finding that someone who does very little work but who has a very good appearance, who is a young, handsome, well-spoken male who's a slack tit—I have heard him referred to as a potential president of the [institution] by at least three different people . . . People really like him, and therefore they think that he's going to do well, and yet to work beside him is very difficult because he doesn't do much".

Since this fellow is also her co-worker this rubs two ways: not only is he rewarded because he's young, handsome and well-spoken; he's also rewarded because he's a male in a technological field and therefore people presume that he knows more than her, and is in fact in charge. As she explains, "I guess that I'm aware [of this] because I worked in technology a lot" and because of that became aware of "how few women there are at anything related to technology". Nevertheless the unfairness of the presumption still angers her, compounded by the fact that she cannot set the record straight. People's—usually men's—perceptions prevail. For instance, she states, "When you have a meeting related to technology, and I'll go with my cohort . . . and he and I will go to a meeting together and because I've done as much or more in computers than he, he is hardware, but I have a more general understanding of the whole thing because I've done more in various areas, so he and I will go to a meeting, and he and I will meet with usually another male because that's the way it is, and we can meet for half an hour, and I can say more than any of the other two, and yet the affirmation is directed to my male counterpart in the sense of what we are doing next". She goes on to state ruefully that she's not taken "anywhere as seriously as my male coworker simply because I'm an older female, and in my generation there's a lot of people out there saying, 'Me? I won't touch a computer!' or 'I'll never touch a computer'". Here she is, in her own mind technically very knowledgeable, but unable to assert her expertise because she's not young, not male, and she doesn't have a Ph.D: "I've programmed COBOL, I've programmed CAI for micros—I've done all of those things, but my coworker, who's only a nuts and bolts type of computer person is still the one that people will look at when anything comes. In my case I don't have the doctorate in front of my name, I don't have anything that might make these people know that in fact I am the knowledgeable one of the two of us". What she is learning about the organization, it seems, is how if you do something that is outside the expected roles that men and women play, roles that seem to be heightened by age, people literally do not see what your capabilities are. As Ellen points out, all it leads to is frustration: "in fact I am the knowledgeable one of the two of us, so I sometimes think that I tend to overreact, but it doesn't do me any good because all it gets you is this perception: "Why is this lady talking so much?"

What else she was learning is the double standard: if you are the fair haired boy, you can do no wrong: if Ellen's coworker was doing no work, the response from her boss was "now lay off, the poor boy has a lot on his mind, he's turning thirty and he's getting married this year", but the problems she was experiencing in her own personal life "was not affecting my job, and I don't think it was being used as an excuse for me not doing stuff", and adds that "that's been one of the things that's impacted me a lot this last while, was [her boss] making excuses for the only other male". Those excuses are not made for her; she's seen by some of her co-workers as someone who can be "dogmatic", and "a little testy", comments passed on to her by her boss, and she says "and I thought to myself how atypical that would be if I were a man". And Ellen did not only deal with a double standard, but favouritism, both based on shared gender. Ellen perceived her boss as "taking [her coworker] under his wing", as seeing "him as his younger brother . . . he's really sort of spawned him", but backing off on his initial encouragement of her as a potential manager.

In explaining how she came to know the institution, she recounts what it was like to work with an older man who has difficulties accepting women as equals, but who seemed to be emblematic of the institution itself and her own understanding of where she fits in it. As she recounted, he's "57, he's been at the institution seventeen years, he knows how his courses should be taught, and he hates the fact that we are being called in to revise his courses, plus we're 'girls', and he doesn't like that". To my query that does he actually call them girls [both women are in their 40s] Ellen replies that

> Yes, well, he's an old school type. He doesn't call us girls, but I know he thinks of us as girls. . . . He's a chairman who will sit and talk at you, and ask you if you have reached consensus with what he's thinking, and you say, 'Well no, not really, Here's what I think', and he'll take what you think and turn it around until he hears what he wants to hear and say how's that?. . . . So he perceives us as nice people, we've got masters [degrees] just like him, so we're equal, we're in the right place, you know, ladies know how to, but he's number one, boss man. If we keep him happy he will tell people we did a good job. He calls me partner right now because he thinks we're on the same wavelength: Hello Partner! My name is Mrs. Peterson . . . [he] would

say, I think, as long as I do things the way he wants them, he'll say I can do my job.

FRANK

Unlike Ellen, to Frank the value of his previous experience—both life and work—was inestimable, both to himself, and particularly to his new employers. It was his "experience" which allowed him to ascertain what the new organization was all about, as he stressed, and then he elaborated: "I've worked a long time". He stated quite explicitly that no one told him any stories about "this is how things work around here"; he knew what to look for because he was the "most experienced manager who came across" from one organization to this new one[*] . His experience gave him the extra edge through which he was able to ferret out exactly which rules applied and when, and precisely which form evaluation would take. He focused on the "rules" of the organization, and in discerning those rules, his long experience stood him in good stead. And even in this new organization which had a large number of young "high achievers, overachievers" who were hired right out of university, Frank was careful to stress the advantages of his

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[*] A group which had previously been responsible for all internal computing work for employer 'A' was hired by company 'B' which was sub-contracted by employer 'A' to provide what had previously been done by this group. Most of the people were hired by company 'B' to do the same work which they had been doing for their old employer, 'A'. The work did not change, but their employer did. For a revealing discussion of "outsourcing", or "the transfer of part or all of an organization's existing data processing hardware, software, communications network and systems personnel to a third party" (Due, 1992, p. 78), and its attendant emotional costs to the employees and the possible productivity losses to the company, see Richard Due's recent article.

"long term" organizational experience: "And because I have more years of organizational experience, and know more about the inner workings of [his previous organization], that's one of the things that I bring to the group that no one else does". This long term experience in the field as a whole as well as his greater life experience meant that when there was change in the offing, "traumatic" for some, he was able to deal with it, as he stressed: "That's why [the change] made business sense to me right from the very beginning. I could see the rationale, I could see why it was good, which allowed for me to have much less trauma and stress in my mind". But for others it was not so easy; in a period of intense change, people without both work and life experience understand change as "unsettling". To Frank,

> there's a period of uncertainty, these people are going to be placed into a situation which they do not have any preknowledge or preawareness of, where they don't have the same knowledge or base of maturity which I would have. Some of these people had been working a year, maybe just a little bit more with [the organization]; they didn't have a lot of prior work experience. . . . Maybe they had only worked for one employer, they had never had life experiences that would have allowed them to be able to cope with stress, but they had, they did not really have an influence over whether it was going to happen or not. What influence they had was going to be very little, it was going to be stressful whether they decided to leave or whether they decided to come across there was going to be change and they couldn't control that. My assumption would be that some people had never been put in that situation.

He noted that his life and work experiences gave him the necessary distance to analyse change, but that analysis was unavailable to the others: "I don't think that other people really thought that deeply into it. I don't think that other people would have formed their opinions from such a stand-off, such an independent view". His lengthy experience gave him a sense of control in a new situation that others lacked.

And even faced with people much younger than himself, hired because they were hard-working and very bright, very much on top of a field that had changed tremendously in the last twenty years, his experience stood him in good stead because he had life experience, which they did not. He states that these "very aggressive" overachievers see him as

> Stable. Someone who has a lost of experience, but it's a different type of experience than learning experience—some life experience I suppose. Someone's that's able to help them understand how to deal in a political situation—maybe to protect them or give them advice about how to, different ways to, they come in to bounce ideas off me. They've got a difficulty with a staff member, and they say 'this is what I'm planning on doing, what do you think about it'? Things like that. They believe that I have useful information because of the experience that I have not only in the organization but just general work experience.

Not only did he value his life and work experience—it was explicitly valued by the senior managers in the organization, who made an exception for his lengthy work experience and concomitant accrued vacation time. Although he took pains to state that this new organization was not "paying for tenure", and theoretically gave everyone four weeks vacation no matter how much experience they had, with Frank they negotiated a secret clause, allowing him to keep his accumulated five weeks. He stated:

> Everybody gets four weeks whether they had ten years experience which put you in the five week category or whether they had two years experience, which would have given you three weeks. So everybody gets one month. To me that sent a very strong message of common values. They were not paying for tenure. And that's an important message to send. And it directly said, for people that had tenure, it was going to be something less. And in my particular circumstance, I had more than four weeks vacation, I was sitting at five at that point, and I was going to lose a week's vacation coming across.

However, the organization, common values aside, negotiated with Frank, who admitted that "the only people that knew, they said to everybody the people that were, there were a couple of exceptions that they were going to talk to individually, and that's just the way they left it".

To Frank it was also his work and life experience which were crucial for him in discerning what made this new organization what it was: their particular hiring practices, and their evaluation practices. The organization hires "high achievers, overachievers" straight out of university and "[molds] their culture and their values and they take their basic set and they mold them the way they want them. . . . And the way they do work it is structured so it is to their advantage. That's why they have such well-structured methodologies and ways of doing thing because they are easily able to change the players". However, these "well-structured methodologies" can work in two ways: they exist to let people know 'this is how we do it here', but they also exist to exclude, to keep people out. When Frank talked about how projects were managed in this organization, he talked about the necessity for very careful planning, for not having the unexpected crop up, which was seen as a lack of planning:

> When you have work that is expected to be done, especially when you estimate that it's this number of work days to do this job, and it's been developed, then that's what you work to. And you work to that, and you build a schedule, and it's a schedule in an elapsed time frame, and you make a commitment that you're going to have the job done at this point in time, and so you work to that. You allow a little bit of contingency in your planning, and you manage your tasks but you're expected to be there, if you said you were going to be there, and you confirm and you keep confirming that you're going to be there, then that's when you're supposed to be there. . . . You make a commitment and people have a dependency on it. . . .

Although there seemed to be relatively little flexibility built into this form of scheduling, and a great deal of emphasis on grinding slowly forward, Frank noted that there was still the expectation that if something cropped up, people had to be available to finish things off at the last minute. And if you couldn't be there for these last minute emergencies, which seemed to be in all other senses actively discouraged, then your chances for advancement would suffer. As Frank pointed out, not being available for these emergencies:

> would probably affect their job assignments. You'd have to make sure that your projects weren't exposed, if they run into something that isn't

> expected, if it's on a time deadline, you've got other people depending on that person to do a job, and there's no buffer there and they absolutely cannot or won't even consider some time of arrangement if they run into a problem, and there's always problems when you have an assignment that runs two or three months, and it happens to be that you're the critical resource to do something, and you're not there to do the job, then I don't want to expose my project to that. So it will affect the type of work you'll get. You'll get put into situations where it's less demanding, where there's less chance for advancement or growth, you won't be put into a team where people depend on you, you won't be put into a leadership role because a leader can't disappear in situations like that, so it affects the work assignment.

The advantages of this were apparent to Frank, but they also said a great deal about the firm: it was very rules oriented, in ways that were sometimes conflicting. There were many possibilities then for various interpretations, or for the construction of a hierarchy of knowledge dependent on the power of the player.

The very precise evaluation system also ensured that everyone knew their place, as Frank pointed out: "you know what is expected of you, you know what the goals are, you know what the project is, you know what your role is, and you also are given an outline that says what will be considered behaviour that say that you have exceeded your performance goal". He used terms like "a report card situation to become part of the evaluation of the performance in that the service which is supplied by us [the organization] as a group is measured through a very structured process by [the client] so if [our organization] as an entity is not performing well then there are penalties, financial penalties which are associated, and if they are performing well there are bonus situations, so [the client] can directly influence not only our group's performance evaluation, but they will directly affect an individual's much more directly . . .".

This evaluation is very detailed, very extensive, and on-going. As Frank describes it, in the new organization:

> They evaluate on subduties rather than large, bulk work activities, so if you're assigned five tasks, [on] each of those tasks you will be fully documented, because there will be a performance meeting, there will be a goal setting before each meeting, there will be a meeting with the person's leader, whether that happens to be the project manager or the team leader, depends on which structure you are going into, with a project or assignment then that process happens at the beginning of an assignment.

He goes on to point out that:

> Every three months they will be given a performance summary. It's written, it's reviewed with the manager, it's written by the direct supervisor, it's reviewed with the manager of the particular area, it's reviewed for consistency, and it is delivered. And it goes into the person's file, and so every six months there is a formal review that is done on their performance, and . . . all these project evaluations go into that. It's guaranteed to be, at least every three months with any significant assignment, such as a forty hour assignment, will get documented and put into the person's file. If it's a significant assignment, and it's open and it's closed, and you had this to do, it would be documented probably in a

> performance memo. If it's an assignment that's a month, two months, six weeks, whatever, it would be documented in a much more elaborate form in a project evaluation that actually takes apart all the components of whether you have done your job, and part of that is areas of strength and areas for improvement, and use specific examples that are behind the information that's on those. So that's a full cycle commitment to monitor performance and delivery very closely.

To Frank this evaluation was also fair: those being evaluated knew what they had to do because it was all written down: to "receive better than satisfactory, exceeds expectations, often exceeds expectations, consistently exceeds expectations". These expectations were linked to "different progress rates" and that is, therefore, what "they strive for". Everything, according to Frank, was out in the open; those being evaluated accepted the criteria by which they were evaluated, and as Frank noted, "these people expect, that if they expect to advance, to move, to progress, they are expected to be rewarded for their strengths, and their weaknesses to be identified so they can work on them, so they can deal with them. They expect that. . . . This is almost like a written contract, this is what I'm expecting of you, this the minimum, and the minimum is satisfactory performance, this is what you can do, this is what I'm expecting, and the person, they know the rules, they can work it". What Frank does not talk about is how the rules are made, who sets them up, how the criteria are to applied. What he is interested in is the surface objectivity, the thoroughness, of the rules themselves, not how they are applied, or more importantly, how they were set up, and by whom, and who might benefit. There are no stories about that.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

From a feminist/postmodernist perspective: How Diane, Ellen, Alan and Frank came to know the organization

INTRODUCTION

I maintain that coming to know cannot be separated from relations of power between women and men, and that these relations of power and knowledge and gender expressed in language, these strategies of discourse, masquerade as the rational and purposeful construction of the organization. Like Derrida, who points out to us that the "limitless instability" of language is repressed in order to ground truth and certainty, that the internal coherence of the hierarchical dualities of Enlightenment thought are predicated on repression, I maintain that the internal coherence of the organization, like language itself, depends on the suppression of the [demonized] Other. The irrational, the episodic, the unpredictable, the indeterminate, flux, are repressed so that the organization might appear coherent, rational, predictable, purposeful, unified. But none of these definitions or meanings are fixed except as strategies of discourse attempt to fix them, and they are therefore sites of both domination and resistance. Neither are these strategies which attempt to either maintain or demolish the internal coherence of the organization fixed, stable or sovereign. Like Foucault, I argue that they are all pervasive, sited in the body, disciplinary rather than punishing in their intent. What we call the organization is a war of manoeuvre where nothing is sacred, where everything can be redefined, where neither power nor knowledge nor gender can be removed from the construction of relations between women and men.

Thus a feminist/postmodernist position on how the newcomer comes to know maintains that the internal coherence of the organization depends on the suppression of the other, the definition of which is not fixed but constantly redefined within a play of power and knowledge and gender which both remembers and denies the power of the hierarchical dualities of the Enlightenment which imprison us still. This suppression can take many forms—it is suppression that is all pervasive, rather than specifically located, and therefore cannot be resisted from one specific point. This is a feminist position which draws on both Derrida and Foucault and their theoretical dismantling of fixity and unity: on Derrida and his attempts to disentangle form and meaning, to liberate us in an endless play of differance from reliance on any external reference point, and in so doing, to point out to us that power resides in the suppression of the demonized other, in the internal coherence which gives fixity its stability; and on Foucault, who maintains not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous. To Foucault power does not arise from a specific site; like Derrida, he argues for the inherent totalitarianism of fixity, of any transcendental reference point: reason, the all-knowing fully present self, language which legitimates itself by referring to the metanarrative which already knows. Instead, power resides in strategies of discourse, the nexus of power and knowledge expressed in language, where nothing can be fixed, where everything is under attack, where no position is completely safe, no theory wholely benevolent, no knowledge fully innocent. In this position, the organization is understood, not as rational, fixed, purposeful, but as an episodic and unpredictable play of domination and resistance, of disciplinary discourses positioning us as they [partially] define us, neither the definition nor the position fixed except as a site of power, both the definition and the position constantly fought over and resisted as we are disciplined rather than punished in carceral institutions where men are in power and women are not.

In this feminist/postmodernist position I focus on how the containment of the Other is maintained through strategies of discourse which arise, as both Weedon and Smith point out, in the sensuous, material conditions of our lives, never located in one site alone, be it patriarchy, or the control of production or reproduction, or the law, or in language. The Other is itself never completely defined, never fixed; it is constructed and maintained within Enlightenment dualities which are discourses of power and knowledge, women and men occupying a shifting terrain which attempts to ground what has been defined as opposites within the Enlightenment discourse. In feminist/postmodernist discourse, how is the containment of the Other as a structuring principle maintained? How does the newcomer come to know the organization which depends on this containment of the Other where neither the self nor power nor language nor the organization exist as other than sites which cannot be fixed nor unified, but where history is more than a memory, where the body has a physical boundary although reality does not, where the denial of fixity in all its forms is itself a strategy of discourse which seeks to suppress our knowledge of the confinement of women to otherness?

STRATEGIES OF DISCOURSE AND THE CONTAINMENT OF 'THE OTHER': THE SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN AND THE DOMINATION OF MEN

I will argue in the following pages that strategies of discourse both create people and position them in the organization, that they create them as knowers and create what they might know, that these strategies of discourse either position people so they "fit in" or they do not, and that this in inseparable from the creation and positioning of women as subordinate, men as dominant*. I will advance the argument that the organization as we know it is predicated on the suppression of the other, of women, that it couldn't exist as it is without the suppression of the other, of women; that by confining women not just to otherness but to subordination, men know who they are, the existentialist argument of Simone de Beauvoir reinterpreted through Derrida and Foucault.

DIANE

How was Diane both created and positioned within the organization as strategies of discourse attempted to construct or resist the state of otherness upon which the internal coherence of the organization depended? How was what she could know defined by the strategies of discourse which arose in the "practical activities" of work, to use Dorothy Smith's phrase?

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* Or as Calas and Smircich (1990) put it, our organizations are sustained, not by "essential 'truthfulness'", but by what the organization has "ignored or tied to suppress"; this institutionalized discourse is not "truth, but a cozy arrangement" (p. 35). They go on to point out that "what comes to the fore in Ferguson's (1984) work, as well as in Joanne Martin's (1990) feminist critique of bureaucracy, is the multiple patterns of subordination/domination that sustain the apparent neutrality and unity of a traditional organizational form" (p. 39).

To Diane, coming to know the organization was inextricably linked to learning that to be a success—to fit in—she had to act like a man, even if, as a woman, she couldn't act like a man, that it was impossible, given the strictures of the organization. But she didn't think that initially. She thought that what she had to do was to do her work well, to do her work "efficiently" and "rationally". Instead, what she found out was that status and hierarchy were far more important than efficiency and rationality. What counted was proving to everyone how busy you were, how your work was the most important and had to be done first, and how nothing was more important than work, and that you proved that by spending long hours at work, and long hours after work socializing with your peers. All of this was based on the maintenance of a gender hierarchy—where women and men did not do the same things, and if they did, women acted like men—that could not change without destabilizing the internal coherence of the firm, without jeopardizing how everything hung together, how everything happened as it did, how people were disciplined rather than punished within the normalizing institution of the firm itself.

But none of this Diane knew—she came to know it as strategies of discourse, constantly shifting, ensured that the women were both isolated from each other, (the construction of allegiances between women are a possible source of power), as well as ensured that women were marginalized within the organization, by defining their work as lesser because women did it. To do things differently from men meant to do them incorrectly; it threatened the stability—the internal coherence—of the firm. The male lawyers who held the power in the organization told her, 'Lawyers don't type', but it was a strategy of discourse that constructed gender as well as hierarchy: if lawyers don't type, the rigid barriers between secretaries [all women] and the lawyers [mostly men, the powerful partners all men] were maintained. As long as the sexes were separated like that, it prevented women from constructing allegiances, prevented women from working together, maintained not just hierarchy, but gender hierarchy, what a 1991 United Nations report referred to as "the apartheid of gender"*. To work too closely, too equally, with a secretary ensured that a woman lawyer would not be seen as suitable; she would be too closely identified with the woman/servant/secretary. Diane found it difficult to act like a man, to treat the secretaries like servants, and to treat her work as the most important around. She found it difficult to adhere to 'status and hierarchy' which governed the relationship with the secretaries rather than 'rationality and efficiency'; Diane wished to work with the secretaries as equals, rather than in the feudal way that the firm employed (cf. Kanter, 1977), which tied specific secretaries to specific

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*Cf. *The State of the World's Children 1992*, Unicef. This report stated that "'the apartheid of gender' is an 'injustice on a far greater scale than the apartheid system that has aroused the fervent and sustained opposition of the international community in recent decades'. Yet the world seems to accept that rights to jobs, social security, property, health care and civil liberties can depend 'upon the accident of being born male or female'" (*The Globe and Mail*, Friday, December 13, 1991, p. A1). Gertrude Goldberg (1990), in her study of Canadian women and poverty, points out that in Canada "the level of occupational segregation is much higher for women than for all but the most highly segregated ethnic groups" (p. 62). In 1988 3/5ths of Canadian women worked in only three areas, all of them poorly paid: clerical, service and sales (p. 69). She goes on to point out that using the American poverty standard, the poverty rate for one parent families was 42.9% in the U.S., 35.3% in Canada, but only 7.5% in Sweden (p. 76).

lawyers. If Diane treated the secretaries as equals, she threatened male dominance, where maintaining relations of female deference and subordination and male dominance was more important than getting the work done, although rationality and efficiency was theoretically what was important in the organization with its emphasis on "timeliness" and being "results oriented". Diane was told that she was not results oriented, which she took to mean that she didn't have her work done on time, but she wasn't allowed to go to other secretaries, she was discouraged from typing the work herself, and the senior lawyer took precedence, in that his work came first. Unless she shouted and screamed, maintaining that her work was more important, (how could she, since she was only an articling student) there seemed to be no way that she could get her work done on time. She was enmeshed by strategies of discourse that both required her to act like a man, but didn't allow her to act like a man because she was a woman, and as a woman, she was expected to defer to men.

Diane 'knew', given the explicit emphasis on billable hours as a measure of productivity and worth, that she needed to get her work done quickly. She also 'knew', because she was told, that she couldn't do the tasks a secretary was supposed to do, because the other lawyers told her ('Betty, you sure look different'). The solution was that she ask Murray, a more senior lawyer with whom she shared a secretary, for permission for her work to be done first, but this was a solution that first and foremost served to maintain the gender hierarchy within the firm. The strategy of discourse—the nexus of power and knowledge put into play to keep Diane in her place—incorporated a hierarchy of gender that was created and recreated both inside and outside the firm in the daily realities of everyone's lives. Murray could and did value his work higher than Diane's; Diane, given the emphasis on gender hierarchy that this incident underlined, had no other recourse but to bow to Murray's higher status. Diane's problem with the secretaries, if you could call it that, was at bottom, how were those women treated, and how might she expect to be treated? If they were subordinate, linked to the lawyer they worked for in ways more feudal than "rational and efficient", if deference rather than an explicit job description was more important to fitting in, what did that mean for Diane as she struggled to find her place in the firm? How was she to get her work done if she couldn't do it herself, couldn't get another, less busy secretary to do it for her, and had to defer to Murray, who to maintain his own status, had to maintain that his work had to take priority over hers?

Diane never knew how to treat the support staff, in that she was never sure what she was supposed to do, and what they were supposed to do. In the context of the firm, it appears that the support staff had no defined jobs; they did what the lawyers told them to do, strategies of discourse which constantly shifted to maintain the subordination of the women. Diane's problem was that she was constantly trying to figure out a job description when there wasn't one, and without a clearly defined job description, she decided that the best way to treat the secretaries was as equals. But that didn't take into consideration that deference and subordination were an unwritten part of the secretaries' job. Just like a wife has no clearly defined job description, neither did the secretaries. The lack of a clearly defined job description meant that the subordination of the support staff [all female] was easier to maintain, just like the strict divisions between what the secretaries did and what the lawyers did worked to maintain the subordination of women, because without strict divisions, how could the vast differences in pay and status be justified, how could deference and subordination be an unwritten but required part of the job? And as long as deference and subordination were linked to the state of being female, not only being a secretary, it was going to have implications for the women lawyers as well.

But even if Diane attempted to act like the male lawyers, the rules—another word for strategies of discourse—were different for the female lawyers, so she felt that no matter what she did it was the wrong thing to do. As Deborah Cameron has ascerbically noted, "women's place is in the wrong". This rule difference extended to how the working relationship between a female secretary and a female lawyer might be perceived. Even if a female lawyer were to copy the way a male lawyer worked with his secretary, there was no guarantee that this similarity would work to the female lawyer's advantage in the discourse of the firm. As Diane pointed out, a male partner in the firm with an extremely competent female secretary who did a great deal of his work was seen as a brilliant intellectual with his head in the clouds, too brilliant to be bothered with details; a female lawyer, even with the same extremely competent secretary who did the same amount of work, would be seen as incompetent and lazy. Same scenario, different gender, different meaning, but meaning constructed in such a way, in strategies of discourse, in the nexus of power and knowledge and gender arising out of our daily lives, that kept women in their place, that constructed an equation between subordination and being female.

Strategies of discourse which emphasized that the firm was "one big happy family" were also strategies which subordinated women, because being in a family has different implications for women than for men: they work more and longer hours but their work is invisible, or not counted as work (are you still puttering in the kitchen?), and they are subordinate to the father in the family, patriarchy in the family carried over to patriarchy on the job. Strategies of discourse constantly created and recreated subordination for women, domination for men: women were supposed to serve men, they were there to do what the men wanted, they were linked to one man in a feudal relationship where deference was more easily demanded, rather than to many men where it might be less easy to have such a loosely defined job description.

Within that sense of "one big happy family" the male lawyers also expected that all the lawyers live their lives the way the male lawyers did, which was predicated on wives staying at home with the kids because the men made a healthy income. For women lawyers, just given the statistics, life was much more difficult—husbands don't do most or nearly all of the housework and childcare the way middle class wives do, nor do their husbands necessarily make the same healthy incomes male lawyers might*. For example, when a sympathetic male lawyer asked Diane, 'How are your nanny problems?', she told me, 'They are so out of touch with my reality'. She felt that even the nice guys had no conception of what her world was, so the words that she used that arose out of her world—the material conditions of Smith and Marx—had no relevancy. They didn't mean anything to him. Why would he assume that she had enough money to have a nanny? As an articling lawyer, she couldn't pay for one on the salary she earned, so to her he must have meant that she had a husband earning enough money so the two of them together could afford a nanny—which was not the case. But his remark, "How are your nanny problems?", meant to express sympathy, also embedded, made more concrete, the dominant discourse of the law firm: that women had nannies, which rested on the assumption of high incomes, but more importantly, rested on the assumption that the women in the firm did the same amount of home work that the men in the firm did; that men's common experiences were also the women's. Either the wives, or the wife surrogates—the nannies and the housekeepers—or in some cases the mothers, because some of the male lawyers still lived at home, as Alan did, took care of all the work necessary to get the lawyers fed, watered and off to work, paid the bills, looked after the kids. The women lawyers had to become surrogate men, in that they

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* According to Brockman (1992) in a survey of the active members of the Law Society of Alberta, "The profession's lack of accommodation for family commitments affects both women and men; however, women still bear the brunt of this. . . . Of those respondents who worked full time and had children requiring care, the women spent a median of 35.0 hours a week on such care, the men a median of 15.0 hours a week. The women provided a median of 40% of the time required for their children needing care, whereas men provided a median of 25% of such time. Women reported that the persons with whom they lived contributed a median of 20% of the care required for their children, whereas the men reported that the persons with whom they lived contributed a median of 66% of

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such care" (p. viii). However, in spite of those extra hours spent on childcare by female lawyers compared to male lawyers, female lawyers billed slightly more median hours than their male counterparts: 1400 to 1300 (mean 1322 to 1321 respectively). However, although women billed more hours than men, their incomes were substantially less (median income for women: $55,500 to $77,000 for men; mean income for women: $63,518 to $94,314 for men. As Brockman points out, "measured by both mean and median, the men in this survey earned more than the women of every call year except for those called in 1990-91" (p. 26-27).

lived in the same way, both at home and at work, surrounded by women servants disguised as wives, mothers, nannies, and at work, as secretaries. If the women lawyers couldn't afford to hire nannies and housekeepers, if they put in, on average, an extra 50 hours a week on childcare and housework, their husbands an average of 20 hours, there was no discourse by which this might be recognized*. The dominant discourse defined male and law as inseparable; that dominant discourse also rendered invisible women's different experiences, and by rendering those differences invisible, hidden behind the theoretically genderless lawyer who was actually male, helped to maintain the subordination of women.

In order to fit in Diane had to act like a man; strategies of discourse operated in such a way as to maintain the link between women and subordination and men and domination. Act like a man and be dominant, act like a woman and be subordinate. That there were real difficulties for Diane to act like a man were simply seen as the price a woman lawyer had to pay. Treat the secretaries the way the men did—as servants, to do what they're told, not as equals—never do what the secretaries do, because that might blur the line between secretary and

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*As Susan Faludi (1991) has pointed out, contrary to popular myth, women "complain to pollsters about a lack of economic, not marital opportunities; they protest that working men, not working women, fail to spend time in the nursery and the kitchen" (p. xv). She goes on to point out, quoting from Arlie Hochschild's *The Second Shift* (1989), that "Hochschild's 12 year survey, from 1976 to 1988, found that the men who said they were helping tended to be ones who did the least" (p. 463). In Hochschild's study, working class men did more at home and talked about it less than middle class men, who talked about equality, but did little. Certainly Hochschild's major point is startling: despite the vast numbers of women working in the 1980's who are married and have children, there has been little change--and even less for middle class men compared to lower class men--in the number of hours per week husbands and fathers devote to housework and childcare.

lawyer, female and male, might call into question the sexual subordination that was at the heart of the firm, the "I know who I am because I have the power to define you, and you are the other". To dismantle that would be to dismantle the firm itself, although paradoxically people might get their work done quicker, it might actually be more efficient and more rational if there were not such rigid definitions, linked to the men and women, lawyers and secretaries, about who did what. Men needed their domination fix so they knew who they were, but where did women lawyers fit in? To define themselves as women, did they ally themselves with the other women, or did they dominate the other women in order to define themselves as women? What might have been integral and necessary to the men made no sense to Diane, but if she was going to fit in, it was going to be necessary that she do the same things as the men, live in the same way.

ALAN

To Alan, in order to fit in, to be like the others, to be like the men who controlled the organization, following the rules meant getting married, buying a house, having children, which had very different implications for men than for women. For the men it meant status, acceptance, a recognition of stability and heterosexuality. For the women this strategy of discourse meant the assumption of doubtful allegiance, not greater acceptance; it meant more work, more calls on a limited amount of time, since women did not have wives. They had husbands, who did not have the children, look after them, and do the housework, which even male lawyers with wives who worked outside the home could generally depend on. The implicit assumptions about the way men do things as the way 'everybody' does things, marginalizes women. So, for example, Alan's law firm, which emphasized marriage, made it more difficult for women, because women have more work to do at home than men, are more criticized if they don't do that work, and held responsible in ways that fathers are not for children. It also demands, in a fashion that is rendered subtle only because it cannot be discussed, that women follow a pattern, based on billable hours and no long absences, that puts them at a disadvantage compared to men with wives. What was seen as a neutral requirement was a way of constituting subordination for women, because Alan gave no indication that there was any change in the organization of the firm itself, no recognition that women still had different demands on their time that the men did not face, no recognition that the way things were done in the firm depended on wives providing the necessary labour for the requirement that everyone be married, with a mortgage and kids[*].

If one strategy of discourse which emphasized marriage constituted the maintenance of subordination for women, another strategy of discourse that ensured the continued subordination of women was Alan's denial that there was any discrimination against women in the firm[#]. He maintained that there was none. This denial worked to men's advantage; if there was no discrimination, then change wasn't needed. The firm didn't need to do anything differently; everything could continue on as it always had, the women hadn't made any difference. The unspoken assumption was that women had been added, but the organization itself did not have to change—the reason, of course that the organization did not have to change was that the women were forced to act like the men if they wished to succeed.

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[*] According to Teresa Goulet (1992) in her summary of the Alberta survey of active lawyers, more male respondents than female respondents were married, fewer men than women were divorced, many more men than women had spouses who were not employed, more men than women had children (p. 9).

[#] In the summary of the survey of Alberta lawyers, Goulet noted that "an overwhelming majority of the respondents in this survey (97.2% of the women and 77.6% of the men) were of the view that there was some bias or discrimination against women in the legal profession. Of those who thought bias against women existed, most of the men (53.8% as compared to 25.3% of the women) thought it was not widespread, while most of the women (55.2% as compared to 19.2 % of the men) thought it was widespread, but subtle and difficult to detect (1992, p. 11).

Alan admitted that the firm continued to hire people who were pretty much the same as those who have been hired before, and although he stated that things were changing, that it was much more competitive out there than it once was, he also admitted that the firm was going to try to change from within, not from without by hiring different people. That this was a way of ensuring that the dominant discourse, inseparable from the dominant men who ran the firm, remained firmly entrenched, Alan did not explore.

Neither was Alan aware that his admittance to the dominant discourse, to conversations, or that his acceptance of the hierarchical relationship between secretary and lawyer were not problematic to him was because he was a man, like most of the lawyers in the firm[**]. This was a strategy of discourse which rendered invisible both the particular problems of women and the gender hierarchy, because he assumed that it was this easy for everyone new to the firm, and not that it might be—as it was for Diane—fraught with much more difficulty if one were a woman, one who might not find it so easy to be admitted into conversations where one can catch the gist of the approach in thirty seconds, where the relationship between lawyer and secretary is taken for granted, where everyone understands the intent of the Christmas skit. To Alan, fitting in wasn't going to be difficult—it meant acting like everyone else—but everyone else was also male, and if they weren't male, they acted in male ways, treated the secretaries in male ways, worked in male ways, got married in male ways.

[**] What Goulet diplomatically terms "career advancement and attaining partnership were the most frequently cited forms of bias against women mentioned by women and men", although only 42% of the men compared to over 80% of the women believed that there was "unequal opportunity for career advancement" for women (1992, p. 14).

Both Diane and Alan struggled with the word lawyer and with what it meant. Who is a lawyer? To Alan, a lawyer is someone who is married, with family responsibilities, a mortgage, necessary responsibilities so you just don't get up one day and leave, "go do something else". These are words which also mean stable, committed, traditional, doing things at the right time. Having a baby at the beginning of your articling year indicates poor timing, an unwillingness to do things in the way the firm wants, something one of his fellow articling students did, a fellow who wasn't kept on. For young men wishing to be kept on with the firm doing things the way the firm wants ensures that they are seen as stable, committed and traditional, all qualities the firm valued. Unfortunately, all of those ideas held very different implications for women, resting as it did on a very traditional division of labour in both private and public lives, one that women found much more difficult to accommodate, but one within the dominant discourse of the firm, could not be discussed. Strategies of discourse which required women to act like men constituted the continued subordination of women in the firm as long as the organization did not change, as long as the dominant discourse could pretend that it was possible for women to act exactly like men, and on that premise, admit them in.

ELLEN

The strategy of discourse which operated to ensure Ellen's subordination within her organization was that she had not lived her work life the way a man might have, however that might be defined by the powerful. What Ellen came to know was that none of her previous work was worthy of recognition and reward; she was classified with the other women in a male dominated organization as one of the secretaries, a strategy of discourse that in a circular way reinforced that all she was, was a marginally more educated secretary, because if she wasn't, she would have been paid more and given a different title. As it was, because of what she was paid, and because of her title, what she knew was discounted. She could not get beyond her sex—that worked to discount her competency, her hard work, her previous education and her work experience. No matter what she did, she was not able to rise above who she was in the organization itself—her position meant that she was support staff. She was marginalized, she was never going to fit in, because she had not done what a man might have done, nor was she able to have what she had done over the last twenty years recognized as important and valuable.

If Diane couldn't fit in, if her subordination in her organization was ensured because she couldn't do things the same way men did them, if Alan was going to be able to fit in because doing the right thing was easy, for Ellen it was too late to fit in—she hadn't done the right things over the past twenty years, what the right things were defined by those in power. Diane could fit in if she acted like a man—as difficult as that might be, it was still possible. Ellen couldn't fit in because her chance was past, and the strategies of discourse which operated in the organization, operated in such a way as to pin her to what might have been, and what she could not overcome. For her, fitting in meant accepting what little there was for her. In Ellen's case, the lack of opportunities were cumulative; what she should have done at 25, 30, 35, 40, what a man might have done at those ages, or a woman following the same path as men, Ellen had not, and she wasn't going to catch up. The strategies of discourse which reinforced that were the ones which Ellen constantly referred to: how the kinds of jobs that she had held previously weren't seen as relevant, that competence and hard work didn't matter, but that being well-connected, and in particular being male, was what really counted, not the diverse kinds of work experiences that a middle-aged woman might accumulate. Strategies of discourse which denied the value of those work experiences, that narrowly defined what work was in ways that were much easier for men to accumulate than women, worked to subordinate Ellen.

These conditions of existence were expressed, in Foucault's term, as strategies of discourse, that nexus of power and knowledge through which we, the knowers, speak of what is known to us in ways that are only partially ours. Thus both Ellen and Diane spoke immediately of where women and men were placed in the organization and what that meant to them, in often painful ways as they became more and more knowledgeable about where their "real" place might be in the organization. For Ellen it became apparent on a number of levels that her real place was not where she thought it was, a slow constricting of what had been initially imagined possibilities and which over the course of a year took shape as a naive caricature—looking around her, how could she have imagined that for her, that things would be different, that competence would matter! She related at length how puzzling the way competence was defined in the organization, how many excuses were made by her own boss for her younger male colleague, who in her eyes didn't work hard, nor did he know very much, her two criteria for competence. If he didn't work very hard or know very much—both areas where she felt sure of herself—then perhaps being young and male was more important than she had thought: "I took for granted that structures worked the way you thought they did, but then you get in and quite quickly see what you see and you don't . . . like the feeling".

Ellen also talked about how cavalierly salary was used as a way of maintaining the gender hierarchy, how cavalierly salary related to credentials, credentials in her mind linking directly to a salary grid, and in particular, how little experience was granted her, although she had spent all of her adult life working, but at different jobs. What women did, it seemed, was not regarded as "real" experience, something that Ritti (1985) alluded to in his article on who gets hired and why. She talked of an all-female department, unable to find a suitable candidate, which raised the salary by $10,000 and hired a man, prompting Ellen to comment that "One thing you know, the value that the institution puts on us, is what they pay us for what we do. That tells us what they think of us, and . . . that's not a very good feeling because . . . we're not paid very well". This was the meaning that Ellen attached to the raised salary and the subsequent hiring of a man.

In another case, she comments on how those in power in the organization—the men—could just dispense with the criteria determining how much someone will be paid—a woman with a masters' getting paid less than a woman without, in this case—and how that "discouraged me, or made me feel sad that it could happen". She goes on to comment that what that did is made her think that "no matter what, no matter what your structure, no matter how rigidly defined, still up there, people do what they want to, there's a certain leeway granted". The "inkblot" which she referred to at the beginning, where "all you see is black and white" is changing: "then the more you look at it, the more you discern shapes and nuances of black". Her inkblot is a place where what she thought: "get an education, work hard" is being replaced by a place where the men on the top, all "tall, slim and athletic, and not necessarily there because they have the biggest brains, the best brains" is the message communicated to her through the hiring procedures, her knowledge of how people get paid, how little the women get paid compared to the men, how little the procedures linking salary to credentials and experience really seem to matter. Strategies of discourse are our organizations, and those strategies inform Ellen that there is very little opportunity there for her—those who succeed are young, well-spoken males who can play a game where if they play by the rules, they get rewarded. To her, being seen as competent is really just another way of being seen as subordinate. Speaking of one man she worked for, she says: "He doesn't call us girls, but I know he thinks of us as girls . . . If we keep him happy he will tell people we did a good job. . . . He would say, I think, as long as I do things the ways he wants them, he'll say I can do my job".

For both Diane and Ellen the nexus of power and knowledge in the organizations which constructed what 'men' are and what 'women' are were inescapable—to be seen as competent, promotable, they would either have had to have been men, or would have, like transvestites, to so have acted like men as to have been indistinguishable from men, to have been just "one of the boys". However, most transvestites are men who, through the power of being able to define, to say "this is what this is", define women on their own terms—creatures who wear impossibly high heels, impossible make-up. How, in a society where men are the powerful ones, would women be able to even approach the transvestism implicit in acting like "a man", in implicitly stating, "this is what a man is, and I am acting like a man' and have her audience collude with her in the deception?* If the infinite variety of human behaviours are carefully assigned to

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*The problem with the social construction of reality and with the symbolic interactionism which inform Garfinkel and Goffman and the work of their disciples is that their focus is, ipso facto, on the presentation of the self and how it is accomplished, not on the why of that particular self as a result of a particular set of relations of ruling or strategies of power/knowledge that put that particular self in place. For example, in Garfinkel's (1967) famous analysis of the transvestite, he focuses on how this man, raised as a man, reproduces himself as a woman. My question when I reread that chapter in Garfinkel is why was the simpering sexuality, among other things, of womanhood simply taken for granted by Garfinkel and his cohorts? As Marjorie Garber (1991) points out in *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, why was sexuality simply taken for granted as established: this biology produces this form of sexuality, this way of presenting ourselves as sexual beings, all unquestioned linear equations? Nor did Garfinkel ask an equally fascinating question--why would a man want to turn himself into such a repressed and powerless creature? If we are seen, by ourselves and by others, as confined to little boxes: this is what women do, this is what men do, transvestism is much more likely than if the possibilities of what women and men are is much more fluid. Unisex blurs the lines. As Garber points out, cross-dressing, transvestism, and transexualism depends on fixity, on rigid definitions of what a 'man' and a 'woman' mean. But the paradox of these rigid definitions, that their very rigidity creates the possibility for an explicit copy that everyone

one or the other sex, what is available for the less powerful sex? The less fixed the assignment of those behaviours, the more latitude, the easier it is for the less powerful sex to challenge the remaining rigidities of definition, and in doing so, to challenge the more powerful sex in their assignment of those behaviours. Ellen felt that as an older woman her technical and potential managerial competence was either taken for granted, ignored, or granted to her younger male colleague—technical and managerial competencies were male prerogatives, not female prerogatives. Unable to shed who she was, she remained imprisoned within the institution's narrow definition of what a woman was. Her hard work and competence, she felt, were expected by her boss, but she wasn't seen as someone who was potential managerial material. Her much younger male colleague, less technically competent than she, much more preoccupied with outside matters, was seen as potential managerial material by their boss. Unaware that she had been hired as a support person—one of the servants, along with the secretaries, with poor pay and low status, and few promotional possibilities, Ellen felt hamstrung, unable to break free from people's preconceived notions of her capabilities, her desires, her need for challenge. The competence which she felt she displayed was simply overlooked by the men she worked for—it was simply expected, like dinner every night at six, its lateness the occasion for comment, not its continual presence. Only when she

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recognizes as 'real', is explored in a documentary that is both disturbing and liberatory. In this documentary on the New York drag balls, male transvestites compete to achieve 'realness' as female movie stars, college girls, et cetera. (Cf. Paris is Burning, 1991, Jennie Livingston, director). The documentary made me think of Gloria Steinem's ascerbic remark that women have been female impersonators for a long time.

transgressed the bonds of womanhood—when she spoke her mind, as it were—was she criticized by her boss. As she pointed out, if she had been a man, would she have been criticized? She didn't think so. Only in being literally agreeable was her job easy—as long as she agreed with the ideas of one of her male superiors was the relationship easy, as she pointed out. To her, it wasn't whether or not she did her job well, she defining what well was, but whether or not this man presumed that she was in agreement with him, and by being in agreement with him, was therefore doing the job well. Agreement, agreeableness and competency were all linked together, in Ellen's eyes, but that left no place for her to define the job or its possibilities either. The challenge effectively disappeared. What Ellen learned was how unimportant her competence was, and how important it was to be a man if you wanted to be seen as someone who had the "right stuff"—Tom Wolfe's words about the all male astronauts of the American space program.

FRANK

For Frank it was nearly the opposite. Strategies of discourse which subordinated women by discounting their experiences as relevant work experiences secured a dominant position for men by determining that whatever they had done was worthy of recognition and reward. Frank talked again and again about how all his life experience—he did not say work experience—was extremely relevant to what he now working at, to where he was in the organization, and to how much he got paid, although his field was a field where rapid technical change was the norm, and it could be argued that applying rigid technical criteria would discount what he had as no longer applicable. But strategies of discourse operated in such a way as to make what Frank maintained was relevant to his job—life experience—relevant to his organization, although what was considered relevant to Frank's organization was discounted in Ellen's. Strategies of discourse validated what Frank had done with his life, but they didn't validate what Ellen had done with hers. Operating as objective criteria where those in power never asked themselves how the criteria which they devised maintained them in power, these strategies of discourse worked to keep Frank, and men, dominant, Ellen, and women, subordinate.

Frank alluded to that in his emphasis on the rules of the organization, which he maintained were very fair, very efficient, very rational. What they did do, of course, if we consider rules another name for strategies of discourse which position people, is to ensure that Frank was placed in a dominant position, and that in the guise of the rational and efficient organization, maintained that what men did was considered directly relevant, no matter what they had actually done, which was not the case for Ellen. Frank was really talking about power and knowledge and gender when he talked about the rules, and it was this that put him in the dominant position, this which maintained and justified his position, this that masqueraded as the rational and efficient purpose of the organization.

Rules are by their very nature sites of power and powerlessness—the powerful make the rules, the powerless live by them. Neither Diane nor Alan ever felt that they really knew by which set of rules they were being judged; they did feel that it was more than just what their performance appraisals said. Whatever criteria were applied, by Christmas Alan started to feel "comfortable"; by Christmas, Diane reported, she felt that in her firm you could be a "geek" as a guy and still "make it", be "pretty much a normal woman" and not make it. Ellen's understanding of the rules in her institution was somewhat different. She thought she knew initially what they were, but then over the course of a year she decided that it wasn't based on competence and hard work; it was based on being an engaging young man. Of the four, Frank talked the most about the rules, and the most specifically, and with the most regard. None of the others really seemed to know, at least initially, how they were being judged, or what the rules really were. But Frank knew. To Frank, rules were the mechanisms by which objectivity and fairness towards employees were ensured; they were what made the organization a good place to work.

But unlike Frank I maintain that no criteria is transcendent, that there is no knowledge that stands outside of relations of power and gender, nothing that cannot be contained within strategies of discourse. So the question is whose political interests do the criteria reflect and how are they put into play to maintain the power of the dominant group? The veneer of the objectivity of evaluation, the rules arising from the game itself, the tautology of reason adjudicating reason as it were, ensures the maintenance of power—and of gender power relations. Because the rules are deemed totally objective, there is no way to criticize, to state that those in power could manipulate the evaluation to get, or retain, or promote, who they wanted, Ritti's (1985) thesis that evaluations, performance appraisals, simply justified what the powerful had already decided.

Paradoxically, although Frank maintained that the rules used by the firm were fair and objective, that the rules were the same for each person and were applied in the same way, that was not the case for him. Frank simply recast the rules of the game so that he fitted what the organization wanted. Although the firm was known for hiring young, aggressive over-achievers, and he was none of those things—he was twenty years older, by his own admission he wasn't an over-achiever, and by his demeanour he wasn't aggressive—all of that he turned around and put to good use. He was older, but he was experienced. He was not aggressive, but he was calm, rational, able to understand where others were too quick to judge. He was tempered by his long years of experience; his training was not out of date in a rapidly changing technical area. It was not what he knew but who he knew that was important. He did not feel that what he knew was not recognized, as was the case for Ellen. She felt that her competence, her hard work, her varied work experience, were all either simply expected or ignored, not rewarded. Instead, Frank felt that that his long work experience and his age—his life experience—gave him the ability to "know what to look for" in a new organization; he knew he could cope with the uncertainty that a new organization meant because of both his life and work experience. What had been a drawback to Ellen—age—was an advantage to Frank, as relations of domination and subordination were reconstituted by the shifting nexus of power and knowledge which masquerades as rules, evaluative criteria, the rational organization based on the principle of merit.

He knew that he was valuable to the new organization because they made a special—and secret—dispensation in terms of vacation time, although that directly contravened what those in charge said they were going to do—give every person the same amount of vacation time, regardless of actual vacation time accrued. He told me without a trace of irony that when the rules were broken to benefit him and him alone, it was a necessary breaking. Although the ethos of the organization was that everyone was to be treated the same, some people were treated differently than others, and the different treatment was kept a secret.

Frank maintained that people were promoted on the basis of managing projects well, which meant ensuring that everything was planned for. However, just like his own hiring did not match the stated criteria, nor did his vacation time assessment, neither did promotions exactly match planning. Although Frank stated that very careful planning by the person responsible for the project should eliminate the unexpected, and that the unexpected was frowned on, nevertheless, if the unexpected did crop up (even if it wasn't supposed to, given all this careful planning) then you had to be available, and if you weren't, you'd end up on a very different career track. If the perception was that you might not be available—although projects were supposed to be so well planned that they weren't supposed to run into the totally unexpected and therefore unplanned for—then you would jeopardize your career path. You could only ensure that you would be rapidly advanced if you were always available, no matter what, for the unexpected. What that meant to Frank was that you really could not have any other commitments other than work; if you indicated in any way that you might have problems if something totally unexpected came up, you wouldn't be on the fast track for career promotion. Considering that careful planning was supposed to eliminate the unexpected, this seemed less to be about work and efficiency and planning, and more about outside work commitments. This is a stance that has different implications for women than for men, and certainly one that both Alan and Diane alluded to. Long hours at work were expected in both their firms;

being there was seen as a sign of commitment to the job, as well as to fellow workers. This extended to quite a lot of stress on socializing after work, particularly for Diane, less so for Alan. For Frank, Alan and Diane in particular, although much less so for Ellen, time spent at work, and socializing after work, were ways of evaluating commitment to work. And again, that has different implications for women than for men, but that emphasis on being with the group was never phrased in such a way that it was readily apparent.

But even with all of these exceptions, Frank remained convinced that the rules, the forms of evaluation which the firm employed were objective and fair, and that they applied to everyone equally. That these strategies of discourse might be ways of keeping some people out and some people in was not something that Frank considered. To him, the rules were the epitome of the rational bureaucracy where he felt he worked, where no one was above the rules. The rules embodied reason and efficiency, objectivity and fairness, certainly not politics, certainly not subtle forms of exclusion.

Frank fitted very well into his new organization, because the rules, the strategies of discourse which maintained that whatever men did was recognized as the right thing to do, benefitted men, and Frank was a middle-aged man who had followed those rules, who never felt any conflict. Alan would be the same in 20 years, and if Diane could make herself act like a man, do all the things that all the other men did, she would benefit too. For Ellen, it was really too late, she hadn't played by the rules, and when the rules dictate the game, she'd already lost. The strategies of discourse which operated to ensure the subordination of women and the domination of men continued to ensure the internal coherence of the organizations themselves.

CONCLUSION

In feminist/postmodernist theory, knowledge is not discovered through the application of natural law by the detached and unbiased observer. Neither rationality nor epistemology nor language—an important caveat—are accorded a position of privilege. Nothing is transcendent, nothing stands outside relations of power. There are no transcendent justificatory appeals of universality, objectivity, impartiality. Instead relations of power and knowledge and gender, constantly shifting—strategies of discourse in Foucault's terms—and materially based, define what can be known by newcomers to the organization. Our talk, expressed discursively, embedded materially and shaped by gender power relations, is what we can know about the organization. It is not, then, questions of knowledge which concern me, knowledge which we can acquire, information which can be exchanged between the newcomer and the old hand, but the meaning we attach to what we think we know, that nexus of power and knowledge that is put into play through the material and gendered conditions of our lives.

If the meaning we attach to our experiences is mediated by power and gender, and if we ourselves are constructed by relations of power and knowledge and gender, then my task is not to uncover invariate experience, to prove that this knowledge is more pure than other knowledge because the knower is more objective. But if the question is not whose knowledge is more pure, whose experience is more likely to illuminate a reality that can only appear the brighter the light, then what do I focus on? My answer is that in this entanglement of the knower and the known, it is not whose knowledge, whose experience, but how relations of gender and power and knowledge construct the organization which the newcomer comes to know, a process that is at one and the same time, both recursive and circular, immanent and inescapable.

The anti-Enlightenment critique has focused on the inescapability of knowledge from power, that truth cannot make us free because we cannot free ourselves from ourselves. Feminism has focused on the inescapability of gender—like transcendental truth, the transcendent, or abstract individual, cannot exist except as something that we wish, and therefore in hubris, create. The organizations which these newcomers came to know—their knowledge of them—was inescapably created within the nexus of power and knowledge and gender which created them as these relations created the organization.

If, as Dorothy Smith has stated, "We're not after the truth, but we do want to know more about how things work, how our world is put together, how things happen to us as they do" (1990, p. 34), how did everyone who talked to me struggle to do this? What was of concern to them, and how did they talk about it? What concepts which were "available to be thought about because their character and the distinctions they [made] apparent [were] already structured in actual social relations" (Ibid, p. 40) were used to frame how they thought about how things worked, how their world was put together, how things happened to them as they did?

For Diane and Ellen, those "conditions of experience created by the practical activities of people" (Smith, 1990, p. 34) were gendered. In both organizations, it was men who overwhelmingly gave the orders, made the money, and had high status, women who carried the orders out, didn't make very much money, and had low status. In both these organizations, where professional equalled male equalled well paid, high status order giver, their status as women professionals was ambiguous. Where did they fit? Where were they positioned, both in terms of the female support staff and the male order givers, and how did they see themselves within this gender hierarchy? As Smith has pointed out, our concepts, our ways of understanding the world, arise from these conditions of existence, conditions of existence where what women do is accorded less pay, prestige and power than what men do in the organizations where these women worked and which they sought to understand.

For Diane and Ellen, coming to know the organization could not be separated from who they were—women—and the discourses of power, knowledge and gender which were the organization; they could not ignore the intimate link between power and gender, between men who had power and women who did not. For both Diane and Ellen what they noticed first, what concerned them, was how they were treated as women by the men; what they noticed later, and more slowly, was how little power women as a group had, and what that boded for them. But this link between power and gender which was of such importance to the women, what they devoted so much of their talk to, was little noticed by Alan and Frank. And if Alan and Frank did notice their gender—and the link between having power and being male—they did not talk about it because it did not concern them.

What is absent in theory by the men who write it, was also absent in what was noticed, and talked about, by the men who spoke to me. Like Hegel's master who never noticed the servant's work, so it was in these organizations. The nexus between power and gender which produced subordination was felt by the women, but not the nexus between power and gender which produced domination for the men. As Michael Kimmel noted in a book on men in organizations, "As a middle class white man, I was able to not think about the ways in which class and race and gender had shaped my existence. Marginality is visible, and painfully visceral. Privilege is invisible and painlessly pleasant" (1989, p. 94).

The absence of women in theory reappeared as the men spoke to me about their experiences: what concerned them as newcomers were not relations of power between men and women, but between men and men, and gender disappeared. Women, if mentioned at all, existed in the shadows. Other men were firmly front and centre, and the talk dealt with, in Alan's case, of being welcomed; in Frank's, of his long experience and therefore of his value to the new firm. But to both Frank and Alan women were irrelevant: never mentioned by name, just one of an amorphous group, to Frank; or secretaries or occasionally women lawyers who worked in a law firm, according to Alan, where there was no discrimination, where everyone was treated the same. Women were either not there, or they were one of many, disappearing in a faceless, genderless crowd where equality had already been achieved. However, as Susan Faludi noted in a recent (1991) and best-selling book on American women, the myth of equality achieved is pervasive, although it is not one which women adhere to when they are questioned. To both Alan and Frank, discrimination by men against women was simply irrelevant; it just didn't exist any more, an argument that Faludi explores as another way to push back whatever few gains women have made by denying that the problem of discrimination against women still exists[*].

But to the women, the men were there, concrete in their bodies, their thoughts, their marriages or lack thereof, their habits, their way of dealing with both these two women and other women in the institution and firm. No abstract individuals here, no faceless groups. Instead there were bodies with power, bodies without, men who could do things, women who could not, men who took for granted the subordination of secretaries and the strictly defined differences between what men did and what women did, and women who did not take for granted any of these things, who resisted the link between being female and being subordinate. The women puzzled over how not just they, but how other women were treated, who tried to figure out, as Diane did, where she fit when deference was required from the secretaries, all women, but it was unclear how much deference was required from the female lawyers. Whatever the secretaries—all women—did was by definition less important than what lawyers—mostly men—did; what secretaries did, lawyers did not, strategies of discourse by which relations of domination and subordination between men and women were constructed and maintained. Or the other woman, Ellen, talking about realizing with a sick feeling that she was classed with the secretaries, all of whom were women, none of whom were paid very well or who had very much status. She wasn't part of the group, headed by all men, who were paid well and who had the most status. If power resides in that which is fixed, that which is simply assumed, what both Diane and Ellen kept talking about was their struggle to find a place in their organizations defined by the equation between being female and being subordinate. Only when this nexus which constructs our organizations is put into play through questioning can the meaning which underlies gender and power and knowledge be deferred. And in deferral of meaning lies change.

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[*] Faludi begins her book by stating that "To be a woman in America at the close of the twentieth century--what good fortune. That's what we keep hearing, anyway. The barricades have fallen, politicians assure us. Women have 'made it'. . . . Women's fight for equality has 'largely been won' . . . . Enroll at any university, join any law firm, apply for credit at any bank" (p. ix). But the reality is far different, a reality which is sobering in its implications for Canadian women: "But what 'equality are all these authorities talking about? If American women are so equal, why do they represent two-thirds of all poor adults? Why are nearly 75 percent of full-time working women making less than $20,000 a year, nearly double the male rate? Why are they still far more likely than men to live in poor housing and receive no health insurance, and twice as likely to draw no pension? Why does the average working woman's salary still lag as far behind the average man's as it did twenty years ago? Why does the average female graduate today earn less than a man with no more than a high school diploma (just as she did in the '50's)--and why does the average female high school graduate today earn less than a male high school dropout" (p. xiii). She goes on from there to paint a depressing picture of even the very few--and very paltry--gains in danger from those who are convinced that women are already far too equal, and they need to be made less so. One way of ensuring that, she argues in *Backlash,* is to trumpet that equality between women and men has already been achieved, and furthermore, that women don't need feminism anymore either, because it's made them unhappy, infertile and unmarried. But the women themselves don't say that; they say that the women's movement should keep pushing for change, so that women achieve better jobs, and more money, and for men to take responsibility for their share of child care and housework (p. xv).

In Diane's case, for example, the meaning of lawyer was not confined to what a lawyer did or did not do, but the way these meanings were attached to gender. Lawyers/men did not type, file or fax; secretaries/women did that. Lawyers/men had wives or nannies—surrogate wives—secretaries/women had daycare. Lawyers/men were free after work to go for drinks, and get drunk and do outrageous things to amuse the partners, play basketball, go on ski weekends where kids were verboten, where expensive ski equipment was mandatory.

Lawyers were competitive, rushed, status seeking individuals, willing to spend a great deal of time at work because the emotional and physical work of marriage and kids was taken care of by someone else. Who we are is constructed, at least partially, by words, and particularly at work. Words define us. In discourse we are constructed: What is a lawyer is answered in words, not naming entities, but as a place where power and knowledge and gender coalesce. A lawyer is this, not that: a lawyer tells a secretary what to do. A secretary does what she's told—that's both who a secretary is, and what she is, and the gender of the pronoun is no accident in that sentence. A lawyer is married with a mortgage and kids, and still averages 1500 to 1800 billable hours a year—but the addition of the words marriage and kids has different implications for women than for men. Lawyers have wives or surrogate wives and if they're women they come back to work two weeks after giving birth, less than men might take off for a prostate operation. These words are all definitions which are contested: "lawyers are people who"—and part of that contested definition deals with gender.

Words, and the meaning we attach to them, arise out of what we do—materially based discourse in Weedon's terms, constructing our world, and [partially] constructing us. Gender is reinforced or created and recreated in words, so the intersection of gender, power and knowledge in discourse creates us at the same time as it creates what we know: This is what a lawyer does and this is who a lawyer is are inseparable, and the who is not abstract. In this process of creation and recreation, resistance and struggle, a lawyer may not necessarily be only a man, but a lawyer acts like a man. The meaning of what a lawyer is has still not been pried away from the word's link to men and masculine privilege.

In organizations where men have power and women do not, the relationship of power to the male gender is not noticed by men, any more than my whiteness is noticed by me in a predominantly white country where we take for granted, so much so that it is not even worthy of comment, a predominantly white male ruling class[*]. So Alan and Frank took for granted, so much so that it was not even worthy of comment, a predominantly male ruling class. That discourse of power and knowledge and gender produced, paradoxically, invisibility, but only for one sex, and in one particular way, but in doing so, ensured the continued subordination of women. It seems that only when disparate relations of gender and power are noticed and talked about by the powerful, when links are made between gender and domination, and gender and subordination, is the uncoupling possible between men and power and women and powerlessness. When this link between gender and power is invisible, it is fixed, a site of power beyond questioning. It is silence as repression, the situation so acceptable, so normal, that it is taken for granted, not even discussed.

Strategies of discourse which make invisible women's knowledge about the organization help to constitute the paradoxical invisibility of women, where what women know about the links between being a man and being powerful and being a woman and being powerless are ignored. The invisibility of women and their powerlessness, and the invisibility of women's knowledge about their powerlessness, go together; they are intimately linked. When women talk about power they talk about men; when men talk about power, they talk about power abstracted from its links to gender, specifically their own gender. When men talk about power, they call it rules, rules that arise in the rational requirements of the organization, or they call it "fitting in". What women talk about—the links between power and men—is ignored by the men; men don't talk about gender when they talk about power. But by not talking about these links between power and gender, gender is elided, and subordination is constituted for women. What women come to know, and what men come to know, are nearly two different worlds, power and knowledge inseparable.

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[*] Although a recently released United Nations report clearly stated that Canada was the best place in the world to live *if you were a man*, and only eighth if you were a woman, the headlines in the newspapers invariably read that Canada was first in the world (cf. The Globe and Mail, Friday, April 17th, 1992, p. A1; The Edmonton Journal, April 18th, 1992, p. A1). Peter Gzowski on This Country in the Morning on C.B.C. RADIO (April 22, 1992) blandly repeated that Canada was the best country in the world to live. As Blackstone stated in his dissertation on marriage in the nineteenth century, "man and wife are one, and the one is the man", so do our newspapers reiterate that the one is the man, two centuries later. Invisibility reconstitutes itself.

Like organizational theory itself, women have been added on to the organizations in which they worked, but the organizations themselves have not really changed. The rules by which people fit in or not are still inextricably linked to the gender of the person, rules that are ignored by the men, but cannot be ignored by the women because this discourse demands that they act like men, and in the effacement of the female gender lies subordination. Resistance is there, but what dominates the centre is still domination by one gender, men still defining the rules of the game, the internal coherence of the organization itself, like the Enlightenment dualities on which organizational theory depends, still assured by strategies of discourse which link domination and coherence in a dance of words where power and gender intertwine.

ETHICS GUIDELINES

I will adhere to the ethical guidelines of the Department of Educational Administration and the University of Alberta within the larger framework of my study, which focuses ultimately on emancipation from conditions of domination and subordination between women and men.

BUDGET

Transcription of Interviews, tapes,
machine..$1500.

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